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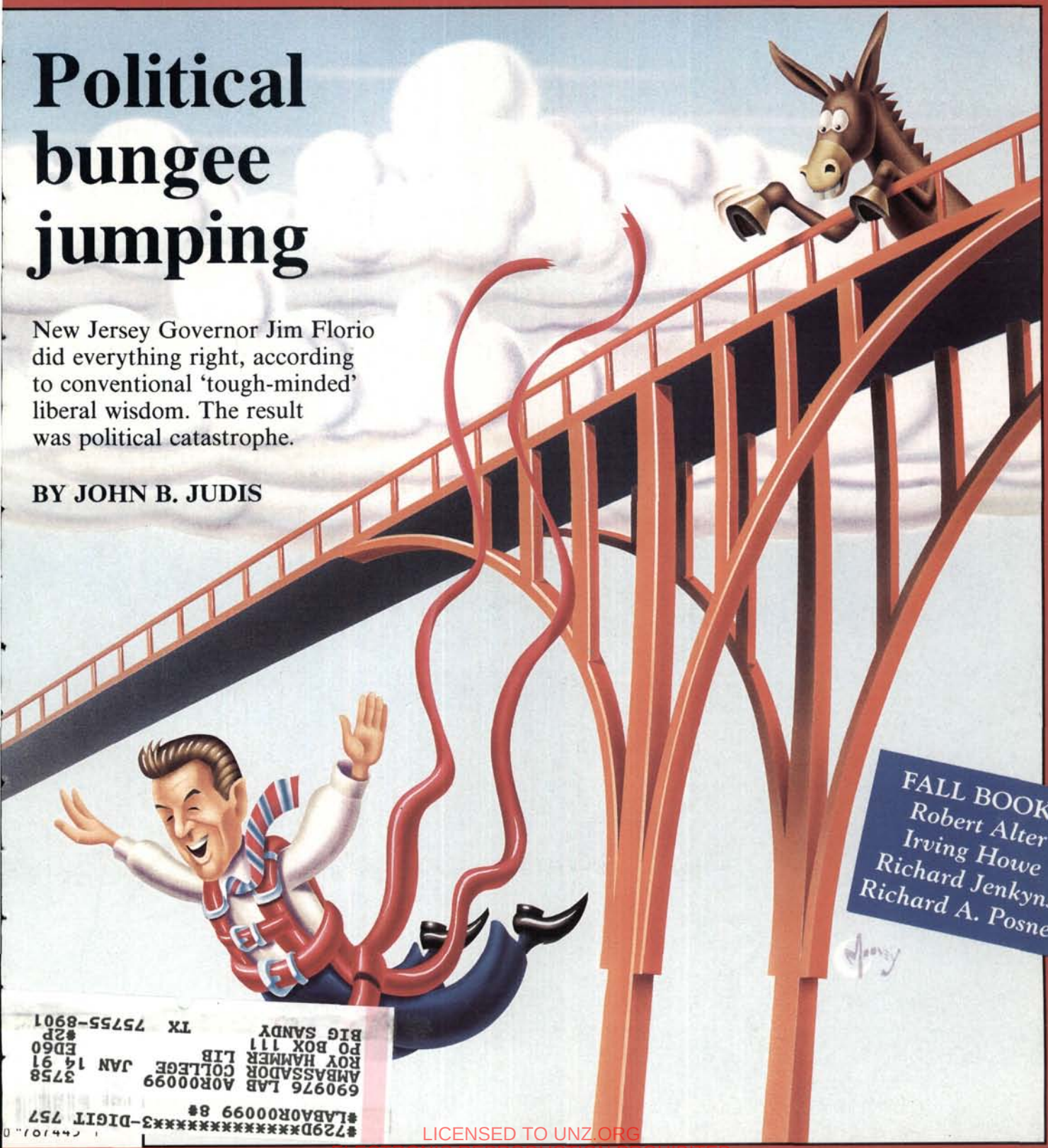

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New Jersey Governor Jim Florio did everything right, according to conventional 'tough-minded' liberal wisdom. The result was political catastrophe.

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

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FROM WASHINGTON

Goodbye to Berlin

The new German constitution says unequivocally, "The capital of Germany is Berlin." But it adds, equivocally, "The question of the seat of government will be decided after the unification of Germany." Unification comes October 3, but the battle has already been going on for months between Berlin and Bonn, the little town picked by Konrad Adenauer as the temporary capital of the Federal Republic because it was across the river from his home. (George Washington picked the site of the United States capital city for similar civic-minded reasons.)

A move to Berlin was thought to be inevitable for most of the past year. Polls show that three-quarters of West Germans and nine-tenths of East Germans want it that way. But recently plucky little Bonn has taken the lead in the conventional wisdom.

Most non-Germans may understandably feel that where they put their capital is something for Germans to decide for themselves—provided they don't try to put it in Poland. Nevertheless, it's not every day you get to ponder the reinvention of a great nation, and the question makes for an interesting parlor game. Is it better for a democracy's seat of government to be in a city devoted more or less exclusively to that purpose, like Washington, Ottawa, Canberra, New Delhi, Brasília? Or does a nation's greatest city have a natural claim to be its political capital as well, like London and Paris? Comparing London and Paris to Ottawa and Canberra may seem like stacking the deck. But in fact the correct answer is that the Germans should choose Bonn, not Berlin.

Most of the reasons given by advocates of Bonn are particular to Germany, and a bit farfetched. Moving the government east to Berlin, they say, will wrongly suggest that a united Germany is loosening its ties with the Western bloc. Staying in Bonn will relieve foreign fears that the new Germany is "facing east." Similarly, they say, a move to a large, glorious city like Berlin will give foreigners a whiff of renewed German megalomania. Bonn, its mayor told *The New York Times*, "would remain a capital without triumphal arches, one that would try to combine modesty and honor." (Washington may not be the best precedent for this particular argument.) Third, Berlin has too many associations with and reminders of the Third Reich—though defenders of Berlin point out that it gave the Nazis fewer votes than any other part of Germany in 1933.

Fourth—a more practical consideration, and one that seems to be carrying the day—moving the entire federal government to Berlin would cost $30 billion to $50 billion.

But the real case against Berlin is the same as the case against putting the U.S. capital in New York. Keeping the political capital separate from the cultural and financial capital prevents one city from becoming an enormous centripetal force in the nation's life, condemning the rest of the country to provincial status.

In Britain you're truly either in London or you're out of town. There are people who say they'd rather live in Manchester or Birmingham, and some may even mean it, but they are few and not generally believed. In the United States the political capital is Washington, the business capital is New York, culture (broadly defined) is split between New York and Los Angeles. This scrambles the geographical incentives, making it possible for Chicago, Boston, Seattle, and a couple of dozen other cities to make credible claims on ambitious youth.

Partly by accident and partly by design, West Germany went even further in the diffusion of power and cultural influence. Frankfurt became the business center. Berlin, even divided and distant, remained the source of most cultural energy. But Bonn didn't get the whole government. The central bank went to Frankfurt. The Supreme Court is located in a small suburb of Stuttgart called Karlsruhe, where the justices socialize with the local burghers rather than with members of the Bundestag. The German equivalent of the FBI is in a town called Wiesbaden. It's a wonderfully democratic arrangement that it would be a pity to discard. A reunited Berlin will be the biggest city between Paris and Moscow. Its power as a magnet does not need to be enhanced.

When one city is the capital of a nation for all purposes, the problem of isolation and elitism (which always exists) is worse. For all the talk of "the Beltway" as a great barricade separating Washington from the rest of the country, daily life in Washington is more like life in the rest of

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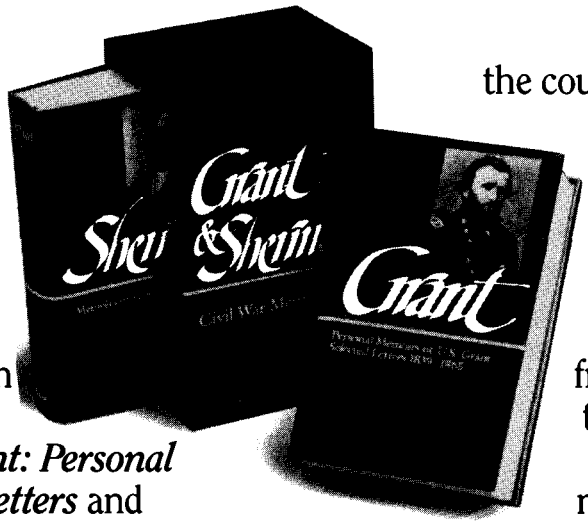
"If you can whip Lee and I can march to the Atlantic, I think Uncle Abe will give us a twenty days' leave of absence to see the young folks."

—General William T. Sherman to General Ulysses S. Grant
September 20, 1864



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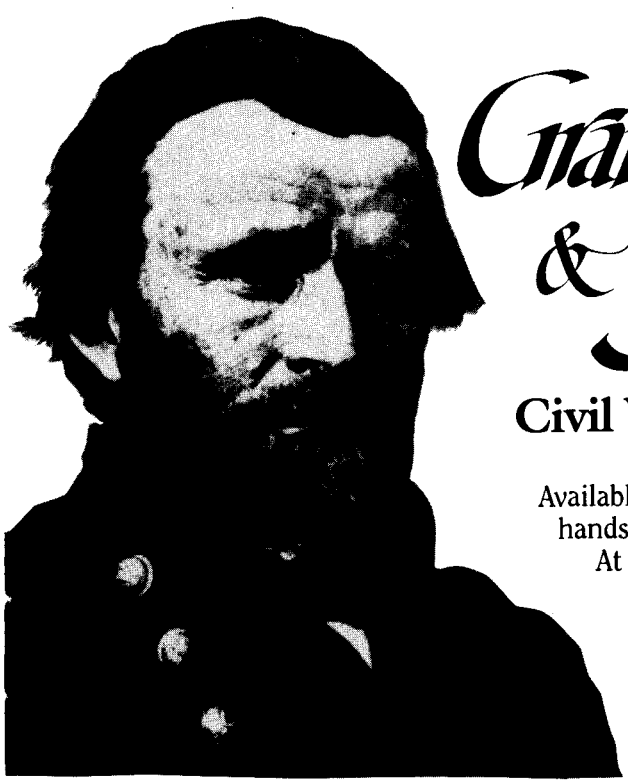

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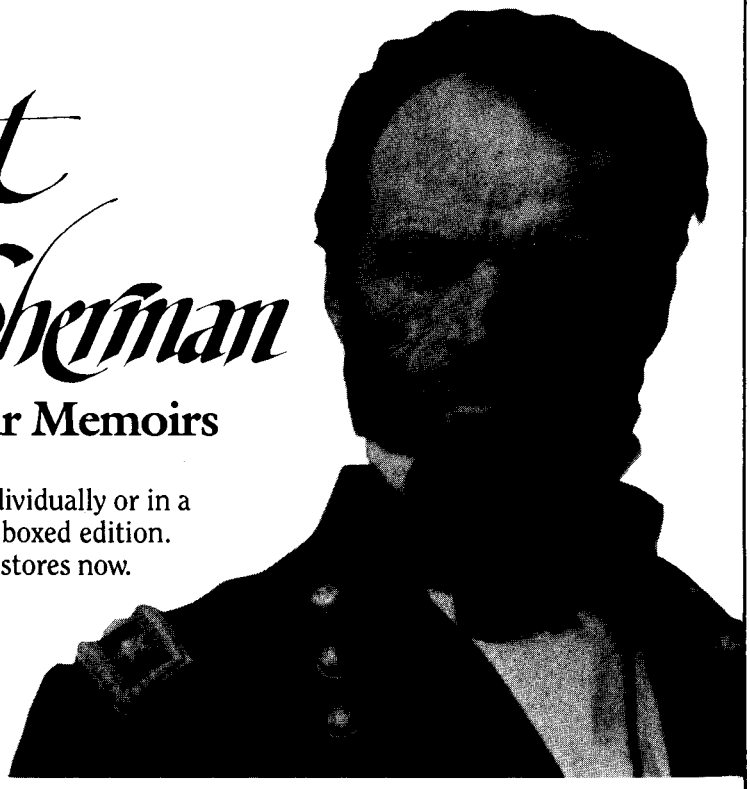

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CORRESPONDENCE

Kissinger and Iraq

To the editors:

I have read with surprise and outrage an article in your edition of October 2 ("The Iraq Lobby" by Joe Conason). The piece is alive with false allegations about my consulting company's activities in Iraq which in fact are nonexistent.

Mr. Conason states that Iraq's recent behavior "did not prevent Kissinger's consulting firm . . . from continuing to do business in Baghdad for years after Iraq's chemical warfare capability" emerged. Yet our firm has never done any business in Baghdad.

Mr. Conason suggests that my associate Alan Stoga was along on the Business Forum trip to help the Iraqi government with its debt problem. This is simply not the case. Mr. Stoga went to Baghdad to listen and learn. Neither he nor Kissinger Associates has or ever had anything which can even remotely be described as a consulting relationship with the Iraqi government.

Mr. Conason implies a relationship between this firm and the U.S.-Iraq Business Forum. Yet neither Kissinger Associates nor Mr. Stoga nor any other member of our firm is or ever has been a member of the Forum. Whatever the views of the Forum may have been, I have never made a secret of my concerns about the need for balance in U.S. policy in the region or of my conviction that Iraq is and has always been a radical state. To argue, as Mr. Conason does, that the Iraqi invasion caused me "abruptly" to change my position on Iraq is to misrepresent completely my views on Middle East affairs.

Finally, there is the implication in the article that our firm must encounter a conflict of interest because we have "interests" in countries on which I or my associates are sometimes asked for comment by the media. But this is to misconstrue entirely the nature of our business.

Kissinger Associates itself has no "interests" in any foreign country. We have no governments and no countries as clients. Our clients hire us to give them our frank and straightforward analysis of international events of interest to them which we do without fear or favor from any nation. It is not, and can never be, in our interest to shade our analysis for any reason. And we don't.

One way to inform ourselves about international issues is to visit foreign countries to talk to people about them—which is why Alan Stoga went to Iraq last year.

HENRY A. KISSINGER
New York, New York

Joe Conason replies:

Alan Stoga did not go to Iraq merely to visit a foreign country and talk to people about it. In the *United States-Iraq Business Forum Bulletin* (August 1989), Forum president Marshall W. Wiley wrote that the delegation with which Stoga (whom he identifies as "Alan Stoga of Kissinger Associates") visited Iraq "was received by President Saddam Hussein in an extended and friendly two-hour session that bodes well for the future of U.S.-Iraqi commercial relations." Wiley added: "Much of the discussion focused on Iraq's current financial situation and the various steps which could be taken to finance expanded trade with the U.S."

Wiley fleshed out this point in my interview with him when I asked about Stoga's role. Here is his reply, which I quote in full from the tape transcript:

"Alan is an economic adviser to Kissinger Associates. He was there because of his general knowledge of international finance and banking problems, and at the present time the biggest constraint on our expanding trade with Iraq is the debt management policies of the Iraqi government. They have a large amount of short-term debt as a result of the war. They have practically no longer-term debt and they have excellent long-term prospects, but do have a bunch of short-term debt that is now making it difficult for them to get private sector credit. Alan, as an expert on international private financing, was along with the delegation to discuss some of the problems with the debt management with the Iraqis."

I did not assert that the Iraqi government was a client of Kissinger Associates, or that Kissinger Associates is a member of the U.S. Iraq Business Forum. These are straw men. My point was that Kissinger Associates does have interests in foreign countries, including Iraq, because its clients—multinational corporations, not governments—have such interests. These interests are not necessarily identical with the interests of the people of those countries, or, for that matter, with the national interests of the United States. Might the comments of Kissinger the media star be influenced by the needs of Kissinger the businessman? I would say yes, but the ethical burden rests less on Dr. Kissinger than on the editors and producers who use him. He is lucky so many of them are even more shameless than he.

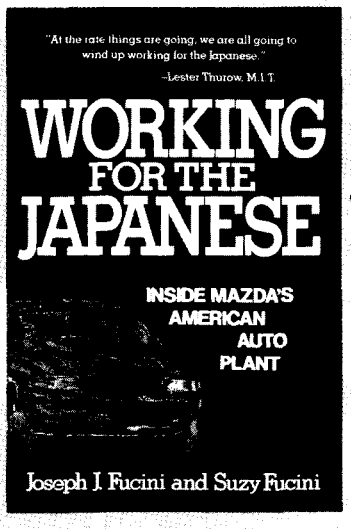
The editors add:

On one major point—why Alan Stoga was in Iraq—Dr. Kissinger's quarrel is

continued on page 53

"At the rate things are going, we are all going to end up working for the Japanese."
– LESTER THUROW, MIT

More and more Japanese companies now own and operate factories and offices in the U.S. What is it like for American workers, with their ingrained habits of individualism, to work for Japanese companies which expect results through devotion to harmony, cooperation and the "team concept?" To find out, journalists Joseph and Suzy Fucini spent three years inside the Mazda auto plant in Flat Rock, Michigan. What they witnessed and now report is a head-on collision of cultures in the workplace that may well put a big dent in the American Dream.



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 15, 1990

WAR OPTIONS

The likelihood of war in the Gulf has mounted dramatically. Saddam Hussein is now threatening to destroy oil installations in the region if the United Nations embargo succeeds in strangling his country's economy, and the U.N. is moving to tighten the embargo by restricting air traffic into Iraq. As Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze put it in New York, "War may break out in the Gulf region any day, any moment."

President Bush has yet to prepare the American people for war with Iraq, but he may have started preparing Congress. On September 21 Bush reiterated to legislative leaders in the Cabinet Room of the White House what he'd told the full House and Senate at a nationally televised joint session on September 11: that U.S. policy is to squeeze Iraq economically to get it to withdraw from Kuwait. "I cannot predict how long it will take to convince Iraq to leave Kuwait," he had said in his address on the Hill, and in the Cabinet Room he didn't offer an estimate either. But he did tell the legislative leaders that "what they [the Iraqis] are doing to Kuwait may shorten the time that we will have to allow the embargo to work." And he added that harm to American hostages or a terrorist incident "may be an issue-forcing event," as it would be "if [Saddam Hussein] allows people in Western embassies to starve along with the people of Kuwait." One member of Congress present said that Bush gave no indication that he thought the Gulf crisis could be resolved diplomatically. "He was more bellicose than he's ever been before," this legislator said.

No wonder. Hussein is showing no signs whatever that he plans to leave Kuwait. On the contrary, he is in the process of destroying it and carting everything of value back to Iraq. Periodic reports of Iraqi atrocities and physical destruction in Kuwait have been brought out by refugees, but Mideast experts such as Geoffrey Kemp of the Carnegie Endowment say the evidence suggests that a truly enormous crime is under way—the obliteration of a nation. And it is proceeding at such a rate that there may not be a country left to save by the time the U.N. embargo begins to affect Iraq six or nine months from now.

The native Kuwaiti population, formerly 700,000, is down to less than half that, according to U.S. officials, and Kuwaiti government officials charge that Iraq is repopulating the country with its own nationals. Iraqi forces are looting homes, stores, schools, hospitals, and offices, summarily executing persons suspected of resistance, denying adequate food supplies to the population, and forcing Kuwaitis to flee into Saudi Arabia. The Iraqis have destroyed or removed all public records, including tax, property, and passport documents, so that it will be difficult to prove citizenship and ownership. According to Kuwait's ambassador to the United States, the U.N. embargo is having its worst effect in Kuwait, where, he says, the population may begin to starve within a month. Administration officials estimate that remaining food supplies will last two months.

Another factor that should drive the administration toward an early decision point is the cost of a long stalemate. Iraqis surely will suffer as a result of the embargo on imports and export income, but so will people around the world—the poor more than the rich. Already losses to the world economy are above $1 trillion, which is Nomura Securities' estimate of the combined drop in the value of stocks on the Japanese stock exchange (28.3 percent of total value) and the New York Stock Exchange (13.5 percent) since August 2. These are paper losses suffered mainly by wealthy investors, of course, but they also represent lost power on the part of the world's two biggest economies to keep their own workers employed and to invest in and buy from the Third World.

Beyond that, according to Philip Verleger of the Institute for International Economics, the average $15 per barrel increase in the world price of oil over the past sixty days has cost from $40 billion to $50 billion, and other drags on world production, especially higher inflation and interest rates, may account for $50 billion more in losses—to which has to be added the costs of military mobilizations, refugee resettlement, and property damage.

Hussein almost certainly has plunged the world econ-

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omy into recession. The Federal Reserve cannot lower interest rates to forestall recession here because Japanese investors already are showing signs of pulling funds out of the U.S. economy. As the United States falls into recession, especially if it is a deep one, it will drag other nations in, compounding the burdens that Hussein already has inflicted on some of the world's poorest countries through higher oil prices and lost remittances from guest workers in Kuwait. India estimates its losses already at $10 billion; Bangladesh, $3.5 billion; and Pakistan, $1.1 billion. In the Philippines, economic hardship induced by the Gulf crisis is exacerbating political instability.

The United States shouldn't go to war over money, but the mounting financial burden of a lengthy standoff is a reason for President Bush to consider an early rather than a late deadline for resolution of the Gulf crisis. So is the prospect that various nations, such as France, will try to concoct peace formulas that will allow Saddam Hussein to exit from his predicament with his face saved and his military machine intact. President François Mitterrand of France suggested in a U.N. speech on September 25 that if Hussein merely promised to get out of Kuwait, the world economic blockade might be lifted. The trouble with all such plans is that if Hussein agrees to evacuate Kuwait, pressure will be placed on the United States to withdraw its forces from Saudi Arabia, leaving the Gulf again vulnerable to Iraqi blackmail.

U.S. military authorities hint that sometime between October 15 and November 15 the United States will have sufficient power assembled in the Gulf to defeat soundly an Iraqi attack into Saudi Arabia. They say that U.S. forces still would not be adequate to invade Kuwait and expel the nearly 400,000 Iraqi troops stationed there and in southern Iraq. Leaked estimates of U.S. casualties as a result of a ground invasion are as large as 30,000, including 10,000 deaths. Some military experts, especially from the Army, claim that only a ground invasion would succeed in freeing Kuwait.

This argument fails to persuade us. Former Undersecretary of Defense Richard Perle and strategic scholar Albert Wohlstetter suggest what seems to us a viable alternative strategy. They say that the United States can achieve air superiority swiftly by destroying Iraq's air force and anti-aircraft missile batteries. U.S. troops could then sever the two supply roads linking Iraq and Kuwait, setting up a siege of the Iraqi force inside Kuwait. The United States also could bomb military and military-industrial targets in Iraq more or less at will. The purpose should be to demolish Iraq's military capacity—conventional, chemical, biological, and nuclear—so that it no longer represents a threat to its neighbors. Utter, unmistakable defeat may finally embolden potential rivals of Saddam Hussein in the Iraqi military to eliminate him. If he were able to hold on to power, at least his capacity for mayhem would be circumscribed by his own borders, and the U.N. could impose an embargo on military sales to Iraq to ensure that this remained so.

The administration will be tempted to wait for an Iraqi first strike before taking such a step, but this hands the initiative to Saddam Hussein—and, conceivably, the ability to inflict considerable damage on Gulf oil installations and the world economy. The United States can strike first. If Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and its refusal to leave are not pretext enough, Hussein's threats against the oil fields and his systematic destruction of a nation should be.

LOOSE BUCHANAN

"I understand how in the old days people got lynched." At last Patrick Buchanan has been struck by the horror of lynching in America. Better late than never. Still, the noisy populist conservative patriot hasn't quite got it right. He thinks that he is the lynched one. The lynchers are the Jews of the United States, to whom he always refers, even as he defends himself against the charge of anti-Semitism, in the third person plural.

The New York Times's A. M. Rosenthal, prompted by Buchanan's pronouncement that "the only two groups that are beating the drums for war in the Middle East [are] the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States," has denounced Buchanan as an anti-Semite. Rosenthal is right. Buchanan-watchers, students of prejudice in America, and political teratologists have known of Buchanan's anti-Semitism for years. No, he is not like Hitler. Hitler, however, cannot be allowed to set the standard. Lesser bigots cannot be protected from criticism by the magnitude of Hitler's achievements in bigotry.

Buchanan's "analysis" of the argument for the use of military force against Iraq drips with hostility to Jews: when he lists the people goading us to war, he lists Rosenthal, Kissinger, Perle, and Krauthammer, and the people who will die in the war, he adds, are "kids with names like McAllister, Murphy, Gonzales, and Leroy Brown." Is Buchanan suggesting that kids with names like Rosenthal have never died for this country? But that's only the beginning. Surely it has not escaped Buchanan's notice that the men who responded militarily to Saddam Hussein are named George Herbert Walker Bush and Brent Scowcroft and Richard Cheney. These are not, presumably, the Bushes of Lublin, or the Scowcrofts of Haifa, or the Cheneys of Brighton Beach. And surely it has not escaped his notice that those in the Middle East who are calling for a swift sword are men with names like Saud and al-Sabah. They are not ordinarily the instruments of Israeli interests, though they are Semites. Neither do the Egyptians and the Syrians and the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis, all with troops in the Gulf, usually do B'nai B'rith's work.

Anti-Zionism is not the same thing as anti-Semitism, but it is not the same thing as philo-Semitism, either.

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Buchanan is neither stupid nor poorly informed. His views are not the expression of ignorance, they are the expression of an inclination. They are also not without precedent. Charles Lindbergh has found an heir. ("The three most important groups which have been pressing this country toward war are the British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt administration," Lindbergh said in 1941 B.T., or before television.) The Lindbergh-Buchanan image of the Jews is a refinement, for occasions of foreign policy, of what used to be called Jewish "internationalism," or what Henry Ford peddled as "the International Jew." This notion, that the Jews are a people whose interests are global and whose loyalties are not to the country in which they live, was a pillar of populism in America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the case of Father Charles E. Coughlin, this populist grotesquerie went all the way to fascism.

Not in the case of Buchanan, though. He is, to be precise, an anti-anti-fascist. Most remarkably, he is an anti-anti-fascist after Auschwitz. Again, his comments on the Gulf are only the most recent of his anti-Jewish barkings. His statements about the Holocaust beggar belief. Of the gassings at Treblinka, he has written that "the problem is [that] diesel fuel does not emit enough carbon monoxide to kill anybody." In a column on euthanasia, he opined that "if no higher law exists, upon what moral ground did we stand to condemn the German doctors whose 'crimes against humanity' [the commas are truly inverted] consisted only of doing to the feebleminded exactly what we seek to do today?" He has attacked those who are "caught up in remorse over crimes committed in Eastern Europe four decades ago" while abortion is practiced at home and communism is practiced abroad. He has mocked the feelings of Holocaust survivors as "group fantasies of martyrdom and heroics." His concern for the rights of persons accused of crimes is nonexistent, except when the crimes occurred in Nazi camps. (By the logic of Buchanan's support for John Demjanjuk, whose case was rigorously reviewed by many American courts before it was brought before an Israeli one, Buchanan should be against the death penalty; but he is grossly selective in his reasonable doubts.)

Buchanan has the right to speak his mind, and we have the right to call his mind twisted. By "we," we do not refer to those whom Buchanan calls "they." From many American Jews, Buchanan may expect nothing but the odium he deserves, but the struggle with anti-Semitism is not only the Jews' fight. The world learned long ago, and at spectacular cost, that anti-Semitism is always a part of a larger pathology. Hatred marries hatred; and the virulence of Buchanan's comments on the Jews, the indifference to evidence, the inflamed rhetoric, the rich conspiratorial imagination, the mystical certainty of rightness, the appetite for enemies, are not characteristic only of his opinions about Israel and the Jews. He is a connoisseur of intolerance. It is proof of the tolerance of America, if proof is needed, that this disgraceful man ranges through the corridors of power and lives in our midst as a star.

NOTEBOOK

SADDAM'S TEN COMMANDMENTS: Posters recently appeared around Kuwait bearing the following message in Arabic:

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL GOOD CITIZENS

1. All employees must report to work. Any delay will be a cause for termination from work and will subject those employees to legal procedures against them.
2. All military personnel (previous Ministry of the Interior and/or Ministry of Defense) must report to the police stations to clarify their identity in order to resume work.
3. All owners of vehicles must report to the Vehicle Registration department in Basra to change their license plates. Vehicles without proper license plates will be confiscated.
4. Every citizen who possesses a weapon must report to the police stations to get a proper license.
5. Any place which harbors weapons or exhibits pictures of the "owner" of Kuwait or his "band" shall be burned to the ground and demolished completely. Furthermore, the owner of such place shall have all his property and money confiscated.
6. Any person who fires a gun shall be executed and his possessions confiscated.
7. If someone shoots a gun from a house or a building, such house or building will be demolished along with all such buildings and houses around it, on a 360 degree radius.
8. Any member of the military personnel who does not report in due time will be executed.
9. Owners of shops must reopen within this week, otherwise such shops will be opened by force after that period.
10. These instructions are in effect from 09-16-90. We urge those concerned to follow them to the letter.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED

HAVE A NICE DAY: Here's another one of those little Eastern European miracles that, if you had predicted it a year ago, would have gotten you committed to a home for the geopolitically feebleminded. Buried at the bottom of page A14 of the September 25 *Washington Post* is a little story headlined "E. Germany Drops Out Of Soviet-led Alliance." It describes a ceremony in East Berlin in which the defense minister of the East German state (an ex-dissident pacifist clergyman named Rainer Eppelmann, whose full title is minister of disarmament and defense) formally resigned its membership in the Warsaw Pact—an organization that, a year ago, was not generally regarded as a voluntary association. The Soviet supreme commander of the Pact, General Pyotr Lushev, shook the minister of disarmament and defense by the hand and said, "I wish

continued on page 12

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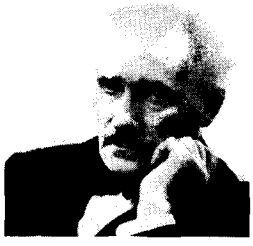
Ton Koopman: Bach, Organ Works Vol. 1 • Toccata & Fugue in D Minor, many more. Novalis **01137**

Bylsma: Boccherini, Cello Concertos • Plus 2 Syms. Tafelmusik. DHM **83876**



Toscanini: Beethoven, Symphonies No. 1 & 3 ("Eroica") • NBC Symphony Orch. RCA **54201**

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Perlman: French Violin Showpieces • Havanaise, more. Mehta cond. DG **15457**

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Horowitz: The Studio Recordings • Kreisleriana, more. A Grammy Award Winner! DG **25056**

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On The Boardwalk • Paragon Orch. Chatterbox Rag, more. Newport **24699**

Arrau: Beethoven, Piano Sonatas Nos. 21 ("Waldstein") & 30; more "Rich...readings."—Hi-Fi News Philips **15366**

Dvořák, Symphony No. 9 ("From The New World") Cleveland Orch./Dohnányi. London **15065**

Pinnock: Haydn, Syms. Nos. 6, 7 & 8 (Morning, Noon & Night) • Archiv **15025**

Fauré, Requiem; more • Te Kanawa, Milnes, Montreal Symphony led by Charles Dutoit. London **15321**

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Ashkenazy: Mozart, Piano Concertos Nos. 8 & 9 • Assured."—Gramophone London **15418**

Anthony Newman: Franck, Organ Works Vol. 1 • Piece Heroïque, Fantasies, more. Newport Classic **10590**

Bali • Gamelan & Kecak. Music of the exotic east, recorded in Bali. Nonesuch **44671**

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Dvořák, Symphony No. 8; more • Cleveland/Dohnányi, London **15042**

Classic Marches • St. Louis/Slatkin. Triumphal March, Rákóczy March, more. RCA **00996**

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Heifetz: The Decca Masters, Vol. 1 • Humoreske, Golliwog's Cakewalk, Clair de lune, more. MCA **00604**

Ashkenazy: Rachmaninov, Piano Concerto No. 3 Concertgebouw Orch./Haitink. London **25157**

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Evelyn Glennie: Rhythm Song • Flight Of The Bumble Bee, more. Percussion wizardry! RCA **24723**

Rattle: Stravinsky, The Firebird; more • City of Birmingham Sym. Angel **93834**

Kronos Quartet: White Man Sleeps • More by Bartók, Ives, Johnson, Hassell, etc. Nonesuch **40256**

Cliburn: My Favorite Chopin "Heroic" Polonaise, "Minute" Waltz, "Winter Wind" Etude, more. RCA **10998**

Mozart, Overtures • Magic Flute, Marriage Of Figaro, more. Academy of St. Martin/Marriner. Angel **34267**

Ravel, Mother Goose; Le Tombeau de Couperin; Pavane; more • Montreal Sym./Dutoit. London **25197**

Ute Lemper Sings Kurt Weill Mack The Knife, Speak Low, more. London **15163**

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Simon Rattle: Stravinsky, The Rite Of Spring; Apollo • City of Birmingham Sym. Angel **63864**

Barry Douglas: Brahms, Piano Concerto No. 1 London Symphony. RCA **00732**

Norrington: Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique London Classical Players. Angel **20760**

Arrau: Beethoven, Piano Sonatas Nos. 3 & 8 ("Pathétique") • Philips **15355**

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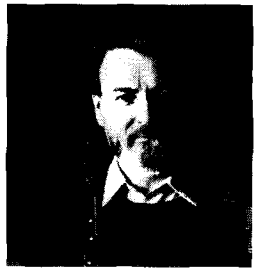

Galway: The Enchanted Forest—Melodies Of Japan With Hiro Fujikake, synthesizers. RCA **44533**

Ashkenazy: Mozart, Piano Concertos Nos. 11 & 14 Philharmonia Orch. London **25424**

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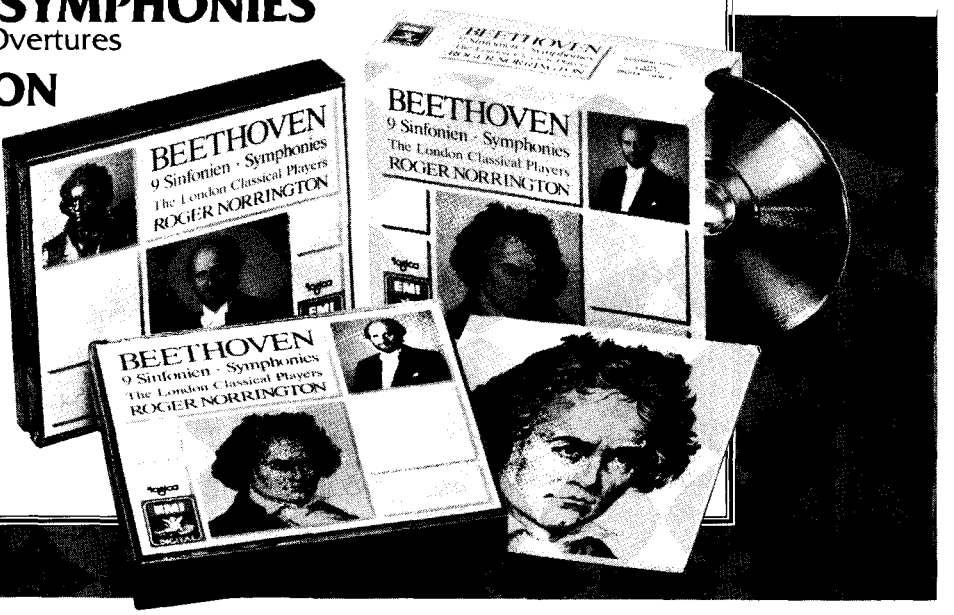

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you all the best for the future." As of October 3 East Germany will have ceased to exist, Minister of Disarmament and Defense Eppelmann will be looking for another job, and Germany—no geographical modifier needed—will presumably require some extra office space at NATO headquarters in Brussels. •

American power after the cold war.

AGAINST 'DECLINISM'

By Joseph S. Nye Jr.

Two years ago Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* caught a wave of public anxiety about American decline and rode it to the top of the best-seller list. When a serious work of history with more than a thousand footnotes starts selling in Stephen King-like quantities, you can be sure it has touched something in the popular mood. For the fact is that despite the successful end of the cold war, Americans are feeling far from triumphant. On the contrary, polls show public opinion about evenly divided between the two camps Kennedy calls "declinists" and "revivalists." Events in the Persian Gulf will help determine which camp emerges the stronger. But a good case—if a necessarily provisional one—can be made that the first major post-cold war crisis has already weakened the declinists' case, and may end up strengthening the revivalists'.

Before August, the belief in decline had already colored interpretations of current events. A striking case in point was *Lignes d'Horizon*, a book published earlier this year in Paris by Jacques Attali, a key adviser to President François Mitterrand and the director-designate of the new multilateral bank for Eastern Europe, who thinks the American decline is so steep that the future will be dominated by a European bloc and a Japanese-led Pacific bloc. At a more mundane level, a front-page article in *The New York Times* pointed to President Bush's inability to dominate the Houston summit of the advanced industrial nations as a sign of slipping American power. Such accounts show little sense of history. Fifteen years ago, when economic summitry began, the United States was similarly unable to dominate. The definitive study of the early summits—*Hanging Together* by Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne—concluded that though no other country could pick up the slack when American leadership faltered, the United States was not able to impose cooperation alone. By exaggerating American dominance in the past, declinists find it easy to portray a diminished American present.

The same can be said of the economic picture. Important industrial sectors such as consumer electronics and automobiles have slipped badly. The household savings rate dropped from 8 percent in the 1970s to 5 percent in the 1980s; the government deficit subtracts another 3 percent. Since gross investment stayed roughly the same, the missing savings were made up by capital imports that transformed the United States into the world's largest debtor in absolute terms.

The declinists stress this negative side of the ledger, but there is another side. During the 1980s the American economy grew by 2.5 percent a year, above its historical average of 2 percent over the past century. Contrary to Attali's view of the United States as merely "Japan's granary," industry contributed the same one-fifth of the gross national product as it did in the 1970s. Productivity in manufacturing rose by 3.5 percent per year in the 1980s, and absolute productivity (product per worker) remained higher than in Japan or Germany. The United States remains in the forefront of such high-tech industries as aircraft, chemicals, biotechnology, and computers. Moreover, some economists believe that the slower 1 percent rate of growth of overall labor productivity (i.e., in all sectors) is an underestimate that reflects the difficulty of measuring productivity increases in the service sector.

These seemingly contradictory strands can be aggregated by looking at the American share of the world product. The American share was artificially high at the end of World War II because the United States was the only major country to escape devastation. Over the next three decades, the war's effect eroded as other nations regained their economic health. But for the last decade and a half the American share of world product has held stable at about 23 percent of the total. In fact, if one uses purchasing power parities (which correct the current exchange rate of currencies for what the money will buy in a local economy), the American share of world product, and of the product of the seven summit nations, actually increased in the 1980s.

With the end of the cold war, the declinists soft-pedaled the theory of imperial overstretch that was at the heart of *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*: a vibrant national economy spreads its interests beyond its borders, then develops a political and military apparatus to defend those interests, and finally declines as the cost of the military machine undercuts national economic strength. As Kennedy ably showed, this has been the experience of many past empires, including the now moribund Soviet empire. But for the theory to apply to the American situation, the burden of defense should have increased over time. Yet even before the end of the cold war, the opposite was the case: defense was 10 percent of GNP in the 1950s, 6 percent in the 1980s, and falling toward a projected 4 percent by the mid-1990s.

The declinists turn this good news into bad. For example, Kennedy has written that the end of the cold war reduced "the significance of the one measure of national power in which the United States had a clear advantage over other countries"—the military. But this

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not only ignores American economic, scientific, cultural, and ideological strengths. It also misunderstands the past and present roles of military power. One reason the United States was unable to boss around its allies in the past was that it was never a fully hegemonic power. Its military strength was balanced by Soviet military strength. Europe and Japan sometimes prevailed over the United States in intra-alliance bargaining because of Washington's greater concern about the Soviet Union.

The end of the cold war reduced but did not eliminate the role of military force. In Asia, many cleavages have nothing to do with the cold war. In Europe, many welcome the continued presence of a United States four times the size of Germany. Even a reduced American security guarantee remains of value to Europe and Japan as insurance against the uncertain future of the second Russian Revolution. And if the allies value an American insurance policy more than the United States does, it may do more for American bargaining power, ironically, than much larger forces did at the height of the cold war.

When Iraqi tanks rolled into Kuwait, they knocked two other props out from under the declinist case. One is the view that the world had entered a multipolar era in which economic power had replaced military power. In fact, it was the rapid mobilization of American military power that prevented Saddam Hussein from gaining control of 40 percent of world oil reserves and a stranglehold on global economic growth. The crisis also exposed the one-dimensional nature of the power of Germany and Japan.

The second count on which the declinists have been proved wrong is the U.S. success in organizing collective action against Iraq. In the Gulf crisis, it was important to move military forces to the region, but it was equally important to have United Nations resolutions defining Iraq's entry into Kuwait as a violation of international law and legitimizing the enforcement of sanctions. Without American leadership in the U.N. to define the issue as aggression, Iraq might have gotten away with defining its actions as the postcolonial recovery of a former province. This success shows that the United States is still the largest possessor of both "hard" power—the ability to command others, usually through the use of tangible resources such as military and economic might—and "soft" power—the ability to co-opt rather than command, to get others to want what you want.

The United States cannot stand alone as the world's policeman, or as Representative Pat Schroeder put it, "the world's 911." On the other hand, it is the largest country in the international system in terms of both hard and soft power resources; and if the largest power does not lead in organizing collective action, no one will.

Over the long term, America's hard and soft power resources will depend upon addressing such difficult domestic issues as the budget deficit, the savings rate, our educational system, and urban poverty. Military strength depends on a strong economic base. Cultural and ideological appeal depend on maintaining a healthy and open society. But there is no reason Americans cannot afford both Social Security and international security. Unlike Britain in 1914, the United States remains both the world's largest economy and its largest military power. If declinist writings persuade the public to support domestic reforms, that will be all to the good. But if they persuade Americans to become more protectionist and draw back from international leadership on the grounds that "a declining power can't afford it," they may create a self-fulfilling fallacy. The moral for a post-cold war world is to beware of historians bearing false analogies.

JOSEPH S. NYE JR., professor of government at Harvard University, is the author of *Bound To Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (Basic Books).

Five hundred days in the hole.

WALLED IN

By Quentin Peel

MOSCOW

There is an air of unreality behind the walls of the Kremlin as the debate on the future of the Soviet economy comes to a head. Outside the fortifications, which have protected the czars and their successors from the real world, the Soviet economy is in a state of almost terminal decline. Most of the old lines of command have been broken. Production is falling, wages are spiraling upward, the black and gray markets are expanding apace, and the shelves of state shops are empty. Yesterday the shortage was of cigarettes and bread; today it is eggs, sugar, and meat; tomorrow it will probably be potatoes. Faced with a rapidly escalating crisis, the Supreme Soviet grudgingly granted President Mikhail Gorbachev emergency economic powers. But this does no more than confirm the constitutional authority Gorbachev already had. And the deputies have failed to make a clear choice for any economic program, calling instead for further attempts to marry the ideas of the radicals and the entrenched government bureaucracy.

The signs of economic disintegration are reported back to Moscow each day. A meat war has broken out along the border between Russia and the Ukraine, with the latter refusing to trade its supplies for fear of having nothing left for its own inhabitants. Roadblocks are being set up to check passing cars for contraband cuts. Leningrad and neighboring Estonia have agreed to set up customs posts between them for mutual protection.

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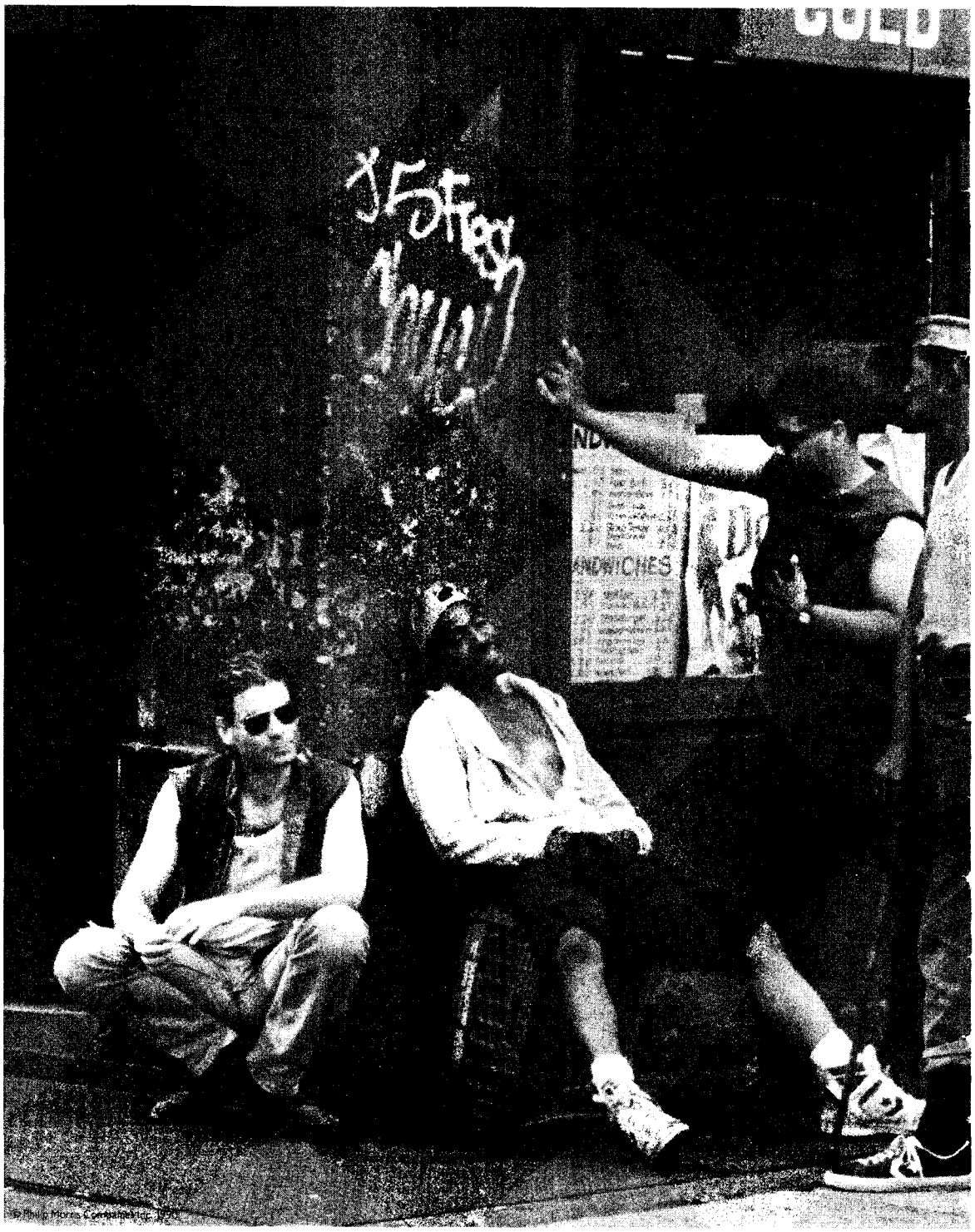

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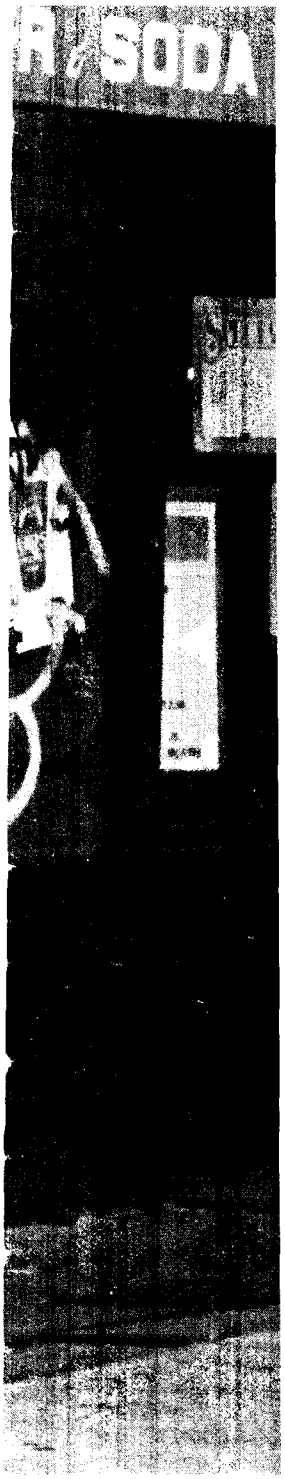

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On each side all essential foodstuffs and basic consumer goods will be sold to residents alone. Beginning October 1 the same will be true in Moscow, once the only city in the land where everything was, in principle, available.

Karelia, an autonomous republic on the border with Finland, is refusing to sell any more timber, newsprint, or building materials until it gets its food supplies. The Komi republic, on the edge of the Arctic Circle, says that henceforth all of its coal and minerals are only available for barter. And Sverdlovsk, the industrial capital of the Urals, has served notice that its factories will suspend delivery of machinery and military hardware until food supplies arrive.

The world's largest energy producer has been reduced to importing gasoline to meet shortages, and still supplies are erratic and occasionally nonexistent in many areas of the country. Production is falling because of a shortage of new equipment and pipes (ethnic conflicts in Azerbaijan are one major factor), a reduction in the level of investment in the oil industry, and growing industrial unrest in key areas such as Western Siberia—which are protesting against the shortages of other products.

Meanwhile, in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, tucked away behind the Kremlin walls, the people's deputies have been debating economic programs. Would they choose the radical Shatalin plan—with the blessing not only of President Mikhail Gorbachev, but also of Boris Yeltsin, leader of the Russian Federation—for a crash 500-day transition to a market economy? Or the government's own plan—drawn up under Leonid Abalkin, once the darling of the reformers—which seeks to manage the process through the old planning structures, and give the workers total compensation for inflation in their pay envelopes? Or would they try to marry the two, seeking in the words of Yeltsin, "to match a hedgehog with a snake"? Gorbachev himself has confused the issue by apparently backing a compromise, although probably more in order to save the face and position of his prime minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, than to make any serious amendment in the Shatalin strategy.

Few if any of the deputies really understand what it is all about, for the plans call into question every bit of economic theory they have ever learned. Even the government's cautious program is intended eventually to create a market economy, and nobody can visualize what that means. As for the plans drawn up by Stanislaw Shatalin, Gorbachev's maverick economic adviser, and his young Turks, they amount to the rejection of the most fundamental remaining tenets of Communist ideology. Private property and private enterprise once again would become the cornerstones of the Soviet economy, while each of the fifteen union republics (or however many eventually remain in this disintegrating empire) would decide its own economic fate within a glorified common market. No wonder the deputies are confused. They are being asked to choose between the disintegration they see in the streets, a managed disintegration through the corrupt old planning system, or an accelerated disintegration in a hectic scramble to create a market economy in a disunited union.

The real difference between Shatalin's plan and Abalkin's is that the former recognizes the inevitable devolution of power to the republics, and seeks to use it to create a whole new economic order. It also attempts to stabilize the collapse of the monetary system with a ferocious credit squeeze by cutting virtually all subsidies to state enterprises and with mass privatization of state property, before allowing prices to be freed to rocket to world levels. The government, in its desperation to ease the pain of the process and protect the workers' pay packets, would raise prices first, then pay full compensation, thereby increasing its already chronic budget deficit fourfold and creating the perfect tinderbox for an eventual inflationary explosion. And it would try to manage the process of disintegration through the central planning organs—Gosplan, the state planning committee, and Gossnab, the state supply committee. Their bureaucrats have a double vested interest in stopping the process from succeeding, since if it works they're out of a job, while if it doesn't the failure can be blamed on the market heresy.

The consequences of either plan seem almost too ghastly to contemplate. Shatalin's credit squeeze would threaten with instant bankruptcy perhaps one-third of all the giant state enterprises, and at least a quarter of the huge state and collective farms. He forecasts an increase in unemployment from 6 million to 12 million by 1992 but insists that at least half the final total will be short-term. Abalkin and Ryzhkov, the former factory manager who is his boss, suggest that the figure would be more like 20 million.

Some claim that the effect of the Shatalin credit squeeze could be less drastic. The rate of return on government capital spending in recent years has been abysmal. A total halt to investment projects might almost go unnoticed. As for state subsidies to enterprises, most have been channeled simply into boosting wages.

But the Shatalin plan has two key problems. The first is its ambitious target of 500 days to achieve mass privatization, the key to breaking central state control of the economy and to absorbing a significant amount of the excess money in circulation. Whether it concerns the peasant farmers in the collectives or the factory workers and would-be entrepreneurs in the cities, or indeed the foreign investors in the outside world (increasingly seen as the great white hopes of the despairing reds), no one seems likely to rush into property ownership until people have more confidence in the future.

Initially, housing, small plots of land, and small businesses would be sold off. Yet even there Gorbachev still seems to have cold feet: Should private ownership of land really be allowed? He wants a referendum, leaving the whole issue in doubt for months to come. In the meantime, would-be entrepreneurs in the cooperative movement have been plagued by organized crime and

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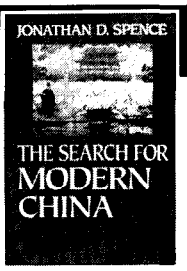

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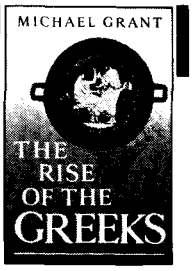

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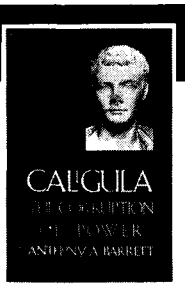

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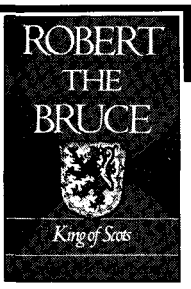

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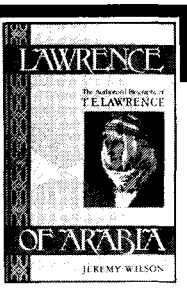

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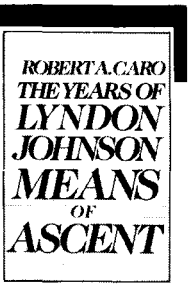

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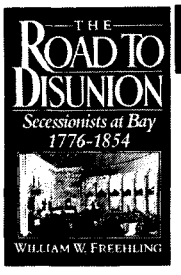

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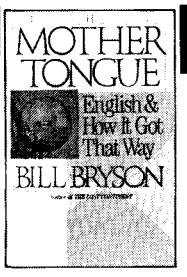

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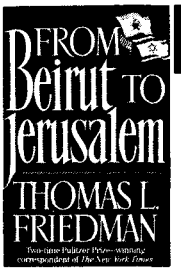

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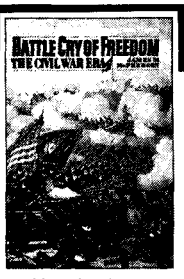

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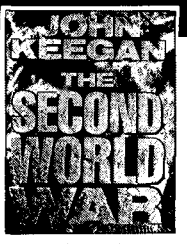

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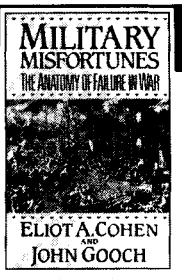

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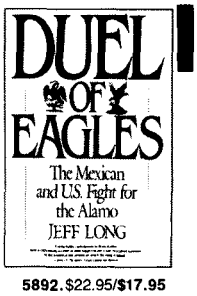

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corrupt bureaucrats, discouraging any who might seek to join that bandwagon. As for shares in state enterprises, which would become "joint-stock companies," there is no sign of a new rentier class in the wings waiting to be tapped for cash.

Sergei Alexashenko, one of Shatalin's young Turks (six of the thirteen economists who helped formulate the 500-day plan are in their twenties or thirties), says the volume of investment does not immediately matter. The key is to break the central state control of enterprises; the full number of shares might only be sold over fifteen or twenty years. In his view, the direction of the Shatalin plan is more important than its precise realization according to the 500-day timetable. But it is also important that people believe it is going to happen.

That is where the program runs into its second great obstacle: Who is going to implement it? Nikolai Shmelev, one of the most outspoken economic writers in the country, who declined an invitation to participate in the Shatalin group, warns that the system is corrupt from top to bottom. "The first layer of resistance is the middle-level bureaucracy, who are thieves, who are living on their bribes," he says. "One of the reasons the cooperative movement was so blocked was because of the unbearable illegal taxation levied by those middle-level bureaucrats. They will never agree to give up their leverage. Then, 15 million to 18 million people are engaged in the *snabzhenye* [supply] system. A lot of them may be nice and decent people. But quite objectively, these people are not interested in doing a good job, but in creating shortages. They are living on shortages." Revamping the system would deprive them of an important source of income—bribes. As for agriculture, Shmelev estimates that there are 4 million "professional supervisors" in the sector, committed to maintaining the existing structure. "They only know one thing: how to carry their briefcases."

A "liberal" economist, Shmelev now firmly believes that only a dictator with an iron first, "prepared to shed blood," can actually implement reform of the Soviet economy. "In one or two republics there will be bloodshed," he says. "Emergency disciplinary measures are reasonable just now to stop this falling apart. I want to be proved wrong, but I'm convinced I'm right."

If Shmelev is right, Gorbachev is faced with the awful dilemma of reverting to the old methods of coercion to achieve economic reform, or giving up and allowing the disintegration process to continue. It is a choice that he is doing everything to avoid. Yet in his political convulsions and his urgent search for the widest possible consensus behind his reform plans he appears to be in a hopeless muddle. The question now being asked in Moscow is whether Boris Yeltsin, a man both more ignorant and more decisive, might not be a better bet for the iron-fisted reforms that are needed.

QUENTIN PEEL is the Moscow correspondent for *The Financial Times*.

The makeover of David Duke.

READ MY LIPOSUCTION

By Lawrence N. Powell

NEW ORLEANS

When David Duke tells Louisiana voters he's put on a new face, he's not kidding. Cosmetic procedures have rearranged his nose and smoothed out some wrinkles. An implant has strengthened his chin. Even his forehead seems more aristocratic. The Hitler hairdo has been blow-dried to *GQ* perfection. Duke has long been a firm believer in the importance of appearance. *Finders-keepers*, a mating manual for women that he wrote in 1978 under the pseudonyms Dorothy Vanderbilt and James Konrad, contains a chapter (preceding the discussion of vaginal contraction exercises) on "The Cosmetic Surgery Alternative." Duke advised his readers that "changing the outside of a person for the better can go a long way toward changing the inside in a positive way."

Duke's attempts to change his political persona have worked too. In 1980 Duke was the Grand Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Now he appears to be a mainstream Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate. Smooth and mediagenic, he has been able to mount a surprisingly strong bid to unseat three-term incumbent J. Bennett Johnston, who is almost as unpopular with liberals (because of his environmental record) as he is with conservatives. Pundits are predicting that Duke (who, like John Silber and other "outsider" candidates, tends to have more support than the polls indicate) will get about 35 percent of the vote in the October 6 open

LAWRENCE N. POWELL teaches history at Tulane University.

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primary—one-half of the white vote and three times the support of the Republican Party's endorsed candidate, Ben Bagert—which could leave Johnston facing Duke in November. Aided by voter cynicism, falling living standards, a crack-induced crime wave, and 98 percent name recognition in the state, Duke has aroused a white working- and middle-class insurgency that outwardly resembles Longite populism in its antagonism toward elites and "special interests."

But appearances are deceptive. Huey Long's "Share the Wealth" movement, and its nineteenth-century precursor, the Populist Party, had a strong class and economic interest component. But, though a segregationist, Long didn't believe you could uplift the poor white man without aiding his black neighbors at the same time. Duke comes out of the demagogic tradition of Southern race-baiting. His target is not, like Long's, Wall Street and Big Oil. It is the black underclass. Duke won a seat in the state legislature last year by relentlessly harping on that theme. And the Populist Party under which he ran for president in 1988 is a collection of ex-Klansmen, neo-Nazis, and skinheads. The new Duke doesn't make blatant racist appeals. He sticks to mainstream conservative issues—affirmative action, teenage pregnancy, welfare reform, etc.—which permits him to broaden his constituency among better-educated middle-class voters without alienating his racist base.

Duke succeeded early on in defining the issues in the campaign, forcing both Bagert and Johnston to move to the right on welfare reform and law and order. But his unexpected popularity also solidified his opposition

Duke's Duds

In David Duke conservatives hear echoes of the distant twang of George Wallace. When Wallace ran for president in 1968, most conservative leaders were aghast. *Human Events*, the right-wing weekly, took a poll of prominent conservatives and discovered that not one backed the Alabama governor. They regarded his anti-elitist populism, with its ill-concealed appeals to racism, as sheer demagogy. More important, Wallace threatened to undermine the election of Richard Nixon. The right's assault was led by William F. Buckley Jr., editor of *National Review*, who referred to Wallace as "Mr. Evil." In a letter to Nancy Reagan, he wrote: "What I resent most is his abuse of the rhetoric and analysis of conservatism."

Wallace's strong showing, however, impressed other conservatives, who saw in it fabulous, untapped reserves of useful social resentment. Kevin Phillips, a Nixon campaign operative, wrote in *The Emerging Republican Majority* that the GOP could realign politics by taking advantage of racial and ethnic polarization. Phillips, who also coined the term "the New Right," made fun of Buckley's disdain. "Hell," he wrote, "Wallace isn't going to hook up with Squire Willy and his Companions of the Oxford Unabridged Dictionary."

The New Right was built upon the rock of Wallace's social issues. Wallace's 1972 campaign mailing list was purchased by Richard Viguerie, who developed it into a fund-raising and membership base of an array of conservative organizations outside the GOP. (During the Ford interregnum, the New Right was more often than not in opposition to the Republican administration, especially since the vice president was demon No. 1, Nelson Rockefeller.) The New Right was then a gathering force; the Reagan triumph in 1980 confirmed its momentum.

A decade later, with a high-born Republican in the White House, the right is at odds with itself. Seeking to revitalize their movement, some conservatives have begun to look on the bright side of the ex-Nazi, ex-Klansman, "conservative Republican" candidate for U.S. Senate from Louisiana. In the forefront of Duke's rehabilitation has been *National Review*, that former anti-Wallace bastion. "No one wants to say it, perhaps the candidate himself doesn't want to say it, but Duke is campaigning on the 1964 Civil Rights Act, basically," writes contributing editor Tom Bethell in the August 20 issue. Dismissing what he delicately calls Duke's "background, and the unsavory people he has associated with in the past," Bethell accepts Duke's outrageous claim that Louisiana's "economic difficulties" may legitimately be ascribed to "affirmative action," and argues that the GOP is uncomfortable with Duke because it has foolishly allowed itself to be outflanked: "Republicans, nonetheless, have put themselves in this bind by refusing to run with the legitimate and potent issues that Duke is now monopolizing."

In its September 3 issue *National Review* itself echoes Bethell's view of Duke as a candidate of substance. Duke, according to *NR*'s editorialist, has won his popularity by "employing the non-racial rhetoric of a color-blind society." He is simply "running on a perfectly legitimate program of skepticism about affirmative action and Great Society-style welfare." And these issues have become his "property" because the "kinder, gentler GOP mainstream has let them slip out of its arsenal."

NR, however, was not the first to stake out this position. Patrick Buchanan wrote last year that Duke's election to the state legislature shows that the GOP should quit "pandering" to black voters, drop its "terrible guilt feelings from its exploitation of the Willie Horton issue," and take "a hard look at Duke's portfolio of winning issues."

Not everyone on the right sees Duke as a model. In the October issue of *The American Spectator*, Andrew Ferguson notes that the facts do not support Duke's pitch that "every social ill is subordinate to—and almost always symptomatic of—the problem of the 'rising welfare underclass' and its amazing reproductive capacities." Ferguson writes acidly that "beyond vague disclaimers of his earlier intolerance and stridency," Duke is "unclear about what it is from his past that he's abandoned. He says nothing today, as a 'conservative Republican,' that he didn't say as the Grand Wizard when he first ran for public office in 1975. The rest, as they don't say in Louisiana, is silence." A silence, one might add, that some others on the right do not hear.

SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

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under the Louisiana Coalition, which disseminated enough information on his past that Duke himself became the campaign's hottest issue. Bumper stickers proclaiming "NO DUKES" and "David Dork for Führer" have been showing up around the state. Johnston abandoned the futile effort to stake out positions more conservative than Duke's and began portraying himself as the racial harmony candidate, asking voters to help him "stop the menace of David Duke." "We don't need to be growing hate here in Louisiana," he's been telling crowds in county parishes. "Why, this man has celebrated Adolf Hitler's birthday every year." (Duke, too, brings up his Klan past a lot because, as his finance chairman says, it shows people "he means business." He downplays his Nazi activities, though, which would cost him votes.)

Meanwhile, Bagert's debt-ridden campaign is collapsing. (Two of his top advisers recently resigned over a pay dispute.) John Sununu's office had unsuccessfully tried to financially resuscitate Bagert's campaign. The Republican brass in Washington fear that, in a runoff with Johnston, Duke will, in Bagert's words, "enable Democrats to put a hood on every Republican head in the nation." That could hinder the Lee Atwater strategy of recruiting black voters. But state Republican leaders at this point seem more apprehensive about alienating Duke's supporters and crossing party lines than about addressing a moral issue.

BEFORE (UPI/BETTMANN NEWS PHOTOS)

But no matter what happens in the primary, Duke can't win the Senate contest. He'd have to capture more than two-thirds of the white vote to offset the one-quarter of the electorate that is black. But he could win mainstream legitimacy in Louisiana for his ideas and propel his white rights movement into the twenty-first century. Plowing and replowing national conservative direct mail lists, he has already harvested $1.5 million. "This is the most important race for Louisiana we've ever had," Johnston said recently, "because in a real way it's . . . where Louisiana will define itself to the world."

Now forty, Duke is at pains to paint the extremist part of his life as a youthful indiscretion. "When I was a young kid, I was a rascal; I'll admit it. But I've grown up," he tells reporters. (His sex manual certainly proves his lack of early sophistication: "When you are around other people," he asks his female readers, "do you ever expose a part of your body to [your man] that only he can see? This kind of sexual teasing can really turn a man on.") But you only have to peruse a few copies of *NAAWP News* to see that Duke has taken a long time to mature. He left the Klan in 1980 (though he didn't change his Klan phone number until last year) and formed the National Association for the Advancement of White People, which he still controls from his home. Throughout the '80s the newspaper was filled with articles on the racial partitioning of the United States, advocating, among other things, the resettlement of all American Jews in Long Island and Manhattan (which he would rename "West Israel"), and schemes for breeding a race of superhumans through government grants to high-IQ couples. In 1986 he traced American dental problems to intermarriage among "different European subraces." Although the newspaper has cut back on the Aryan stuff, now that Duke has become a political figure, it continues to feature stories about the submergence of the white race beneath a tide of welfare illegitimacy and "Third World" immigration. And he continued to sell Nazi literature out of his legislative office until three months after he was elected.

Occasionally the essential Duke still breaks through. Last December he told a local college student in a taped interview that he agreed with Hitler that America should not have fought in World War II, and that blacks were genetically predisposed toward criminal behavior. Iceland was the only all-white nation left, he continued, and "Iceland is not enough." As for the eugenics issue: "I see nothing wrong with encouraging unproductive people to have fewer children, economically, and encourag-

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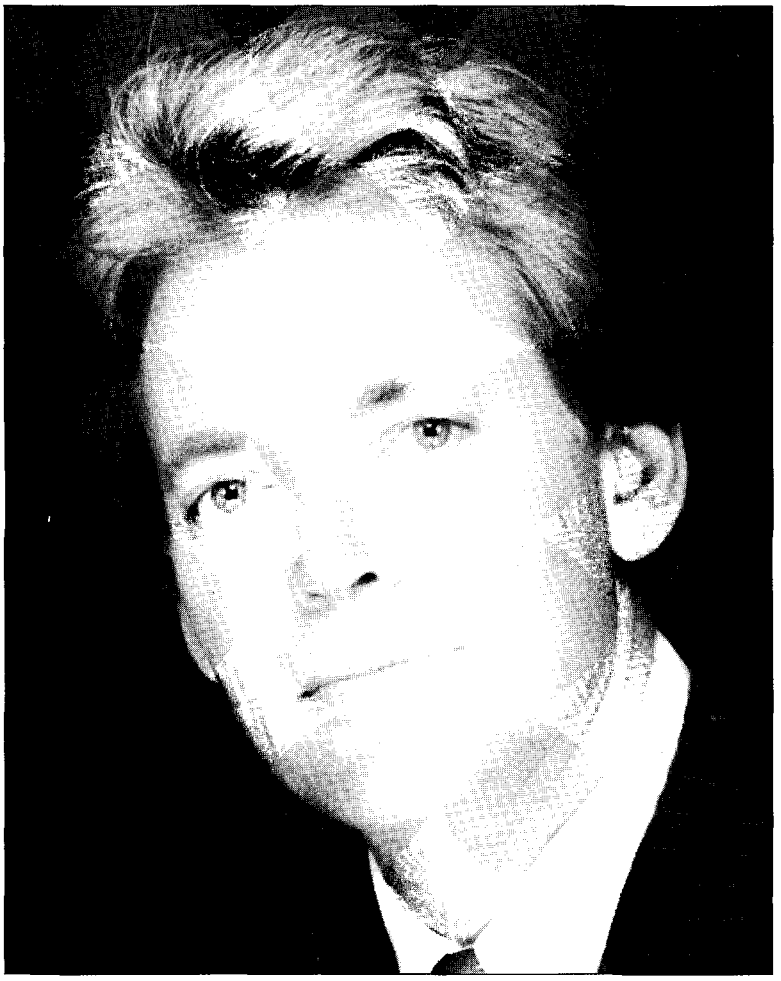
ing the most productive people to have children. . . . I think that adds beauty to the whole society, and quality and excellence to all society." And in a recent debate with Bagert he admitted that he still believes that the blood supply should be racially segregated.

Though Duke usually refrains from such crude theorizing in his public appearances, his racist appeals are only somewhat more veiled when addressing his followers. In his rallies he concentrates on a welfare underclass leeching off the productive taxpayer in order to feed its drug habit and produce more illegitimate babies, or the massive reverse discrimination of affirmative action policies, which Duke, ironically, attacks as "Hitlerian" because, like the Nuremberg laws, they promulgate "racial classifications." His fans like what they hear. From Maxie in southwest Louisiana to Monroe in the northeast, large, sometimes volatile gatherings of farmers, oil field roughnecks, skilled craftsmen, technical workers, and retirees pack into HoJo meeting rooms and country-western bars to hear Duke lash out. Many arrive wearing blue Duke T-shirts and baseball caps. In the low, guttural style of a '50s-era Doo-Wop group, they chant, "Duke, Duke, Duke, Duke." When he recently accused Washington liberals of betraying working men and women, many in the audience cried out, "The niggers are taking over."



AFTER (DUKE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS IN METAIRIE)

The anger and resentment whipped up by Duke lacks a rational basis in Louisiana. Black fertility rates aren't skyrocketing; they've been falling (although marriage rates are, too). With average monthly benefits of about $60 per person, the state's welfare system is the fifth-chintziest in the nation, and the total annual AFDC outlay amounts to less than 2 percent of the entire state budget. There are no studies showing how many Louisianians have been affected by affirmative action programs (former Governor Edwin Edwards estimates 500 people). But a 1990 investigation of the state set-aside program proves blacks haven't displaced whites on the public works gravy train: from 1985 to 1989 black-owned construction firms received less than 3 percent of the dollar value of all contracts awarded by the state transportation department. Yet Duke has managed to rally an entire movement around the folklore that welfare spending is responsible for high taxes and blacks are taking jobs away from whites. Why the racial backlash?

What is happening down here, to paraphrase Randy Newman, is that the social groups that lost the most economic ground during the 1980s are turning on each other. Unemployment and bankruptcy rates in Louisiana until recently were well above national averages. Duke's political base, in suburban Jefferson parish, is the wealthiest in the state. But even there, according to University of South Alabama economist James Bobo, from 1982 to 1987 real personal income deriving from salaries and wages shrunk by 6.5 percent. The declines have been catastrophic in the blue-collar sector, the backbone of Duke's Jefferson parish electorate. The real income of oil and gas workers has been cut nearly in half; that of construction workers has fallen by about one-third. Repairmen have experienced a 55 percent shrinkage in their living standards.

Duke's coded rhetoric feeds a growing white middle-class economic resentment that is not exclusive to Louisiana. Even many Duke opponents confess: "You know, there are some things I agree with Duke on." What separates them from Duke supporters is the intensity of racial feeling. Whites who flock to Duke simply want a more powerful symbol for their racial resentment, a strong voice for "white people."

The groundwork for Duke's present campaign was laid with his House District 81 victory of 1989, when he sheared off the middle-class bottom of a top-heavy Republican voting bloc and combined it with the district's Democratic skilled blue-collar voters—exactly what George Wallace did when he carried this area and the state two decades earlier. Duke's support now includes more income groups, especially in the middle class. He is garnering about 50 percent of the voting white males earning less than $40,000. He leads in skilled blue-collar

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households, and substantially among non-public employee unionists. Whites who never made it past high school, a disproportionately large group in Louisiana (and one that lost heavily in the '80s), favor Duke. His voters are more apt to admit that their personal economic situation has worsened in the last few years, and to agree that government is crooked, wasteful, and run for the benefit of a few special interests.

Since the days of Huey and Earl Long, Louisianians have come to expect from state government expansive social services at low personal cost, because outside oil and gas companies were always around to pick up the tab. But falling mineral revenues have forced the state to cut services and raise sales taxes. Now that the white middle class is having to foot more of the tax bill—at a time when its own living standards are in decline—it's rebelling against paying for social services targeted at the poor. Intensifying that anti-government feeling have been conservative Governor Charles "Buddy" Roemer's unsuccessful attempts to shift the tax burden from corporations to the middle and working classes. They have been in revolt ever since.

Duke's campaign against affirmative action in the name of "equal rights for all" exploits the pervasive resentment that special interests are being favored while the little man is squeezed. Duke's particular strength is his ability to convince his supporters that blacks are the source of their grievance. It's tempting to dismiss Duke as another example of Louisiana's penchant for producing colorful politicians. But as Walker Percy said last year, Duke is not "a unique phenomenon confined to Louisiana rednecks and yahoos. He's not just appealing to the old Klan constituency, he's appealing to the white middle class. And don't think that he or somebody like him won't appeal to the white middle class of Chicago or Queens." That's the group that Kevin Phillips argues is ripe for revolt. Phillips may be right that a new cycle of populist politics is in the offing, but it doesn't follow that it will target the rich. Growing economic uncertainty could just as easily unleash another round of racial and ethnic scapegoating. That too is part of the American political tradition. •

Progressive populism bombs in New Jersey.

A TAXING GOVERNOR

By John B. Judis

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

Liberal columnists, consultants, and politicians greeted the dramatic first hundred days of New Jersey Governor Jim Florio as a sign of imminent realignment. Tom Wicker wrote in his June 25 *New York Times* column that Florio "pushed through . . . a program that might be called liberalism brought up to date and adapted for the '90s." Consultant Ann Lewis said that Florio "represents the future of American politics." New York Governor Mario Cuomo even began touting Florio as a presidential prospect in 1992. Florio and his key officials described themselves as a vanguard of change within the Democratic Party. Treasurer Doug Berman, the governor's closest adviser, called Florio "the cutting edge of the Democrats." Florio put it somewhat more modestly. "New Jersey is on the cutting edge," he explained in a telephone interview.

Today the Florio administration lies in ruins, besieged by a popular revolt against its program to raise taxes and to shift state education expenditures from higher-income to lower-income districts. In opinion polls Florio's approval rating hovers around 20 percent. Even loyal Democrats have begun to jump ship. "We haven't suffered a death blow, but it's pretty close," one administration official privately admits.

What happened to the latest hero of liberalism? And how could analysts and commentators once again be so mistaken about the prospects of a like-minded politician? Has Florio's plummeting popularity been the result of tactical errors? Or did it reflect some deeper malady in liberalism itself?

Florio was elected by a landslide in November 1989 after a campaign against Representative Jim Courter that *Washington Post* columnist David Broder described as "deep in mud." Florio's first month in office was highly successful. Making good on the only substantive promises of his campaign, he appointed an environmental prosecutor and introduced a bold plan for reducing New Jersey's skyrocketing auto insurance rates.

But Florio still faced two extraordinarily difficult challenges. The previous year his predecessor, Repub-

continued on page 24

JOHN B. JUDIS is senior editor of *In These Times* and the author of the forthcoming *Grand Illusion: Critics and Champions of the American Century* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

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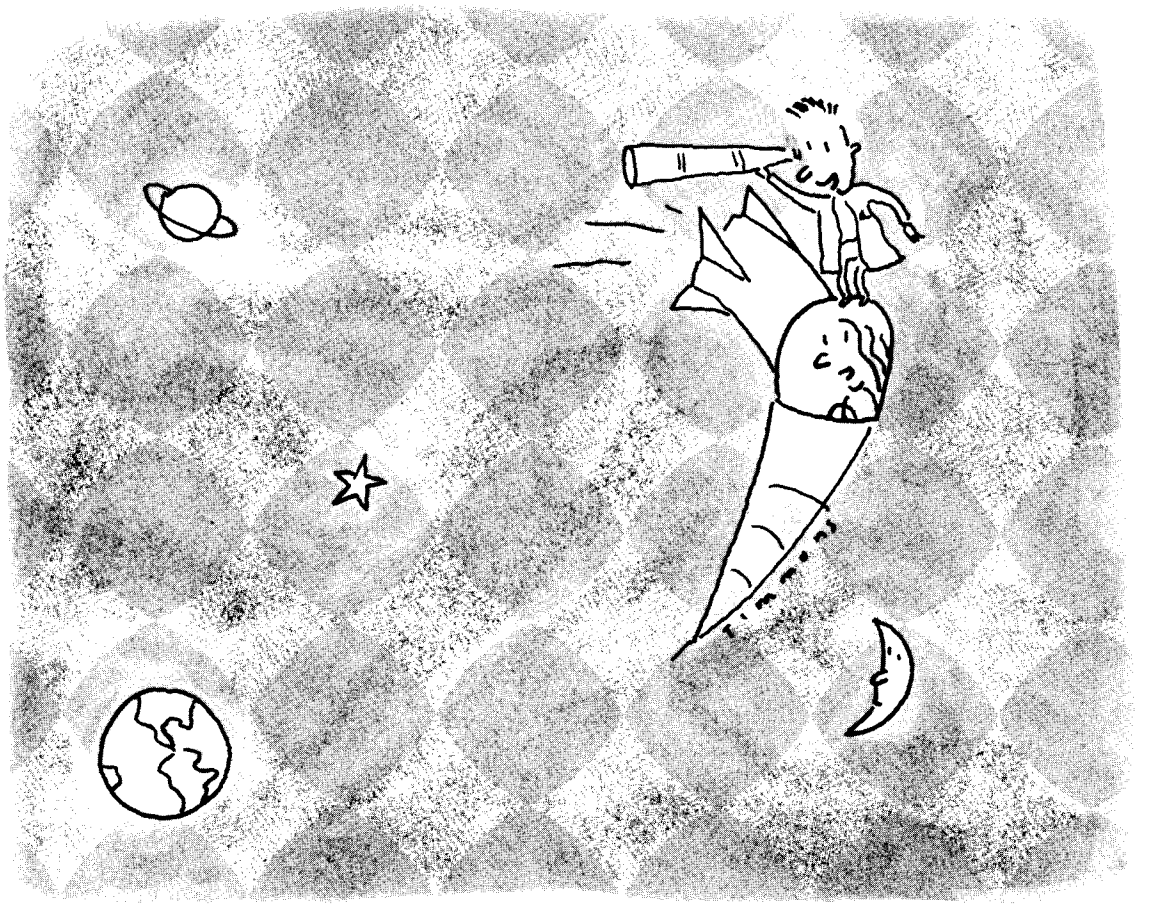

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lican Thomas Kean, had gotten the legislature to pass a budget based on extremely optimistic revenue projections and one-year funding gimmicks. As even Republicans had warned, the budget came up short—by $550 million, Berman announced on February 6. Moreover, as the economy in the Northeast continued to slow, the gap between expenditures and revenues was expected to widen. Florio had to find a way to close this gap. He had pledged an audit of state expenditures, which had grown a gargantuan 130 percent during the Kean years, but had promised not to raise taxes. However, administration members soon realized that to make up the shortfall, they would also have to raise taxes.

The budgetary crisis was reinforced by the crisis in education. New Jersey's public school system is organized in 611 small districts, segregated by both class and race. Funded primarily through property taxes, it is one of the most inequitable in the country. A predominately black and poor city such as Camden spends $4,184 per student, whereas a district like Princeton spends $8,344. Relying on a provision in the state constitution requiring "thorough and efficient" schooling, several poorer school districts challenged the way the districts funded education. The court, whose chief justice, Robert Wilentz, had banned the filming of *Bonfire of the Vanities* outside a New Jersey courthouse because he believed the movie was racist, was expected to rule in the plaintiffs' favor, forcing the state to pay much more to the poorer public school districts. The administration had to figure out how to meet these expenditures as well as how to improve inner-city education.

JIM FLORIO BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Florio's strategy was to take advantage of the enormous power New Jersey vests in its governors: he did everything at once. The governor here is the only statewide elected official; the legislature is a part-time body that rarely initiates legislation; and voters do not have the constitutional means to recall officials or put initiatives on the ballot. Florio and his advisers also reasoned that if he tried to present his program in stages—taxes one year, education the next—he would allow the opposition time to mobilize.

This approach reflected the different strands in Florio's own political background. He is a peculiar blend of working-class Democrat and good-government technocrat. The son of a Brooklyn shipyard worker, he dropped out of high school in the twelfth grade, got his diploma in the Navy, and then attended Trenton State, where he won a Woodrow Wilson Scholarship to study political science at Columbia. He returned to New Jersey, however, attending law school while working his way up the ladder of state politics. In 1970 he was elected to the state legislature from Camden, and in 1974 won a congressional seat against a pro-Nixon Republican incumbent. A former boxer, Florio has the face (one cheek collapsed from a left hook) and the pedigree of a working-class populist, but like many self-made men, he is uncomfortable with populist appeals. He is also a would-be intellectual who is as much at home debating the technicalities of environmental policy as slapping backs in a union hall.

In Congress he made his mark in 1980 as both legislator and populist when he led the fight for the Toxic Superfund bill—an extremely complex piece of legislation that put the costs of environmental cleanup on corporate polluters. This year, as he sought ways to solve New Jersey's budget and education crises, he turned toward "progressive populism," a variant of traditional liberalism that had become fashionable among some political consultants and policy buffs in the wake of Michael Dukakis's 1988 defeat.

The premise of progressive populism was that Democrats could fund social programs not only through defense cuts, but through raising taxes on the wealthy. It was spelled out in a manifesto published in the spring 1989 *World Policy Journal* and signed by thirteen prominent liberals, including Ann Lewis, Stanley Greenberg, Robert B. Reich, and Hodding Carter III. Most recently

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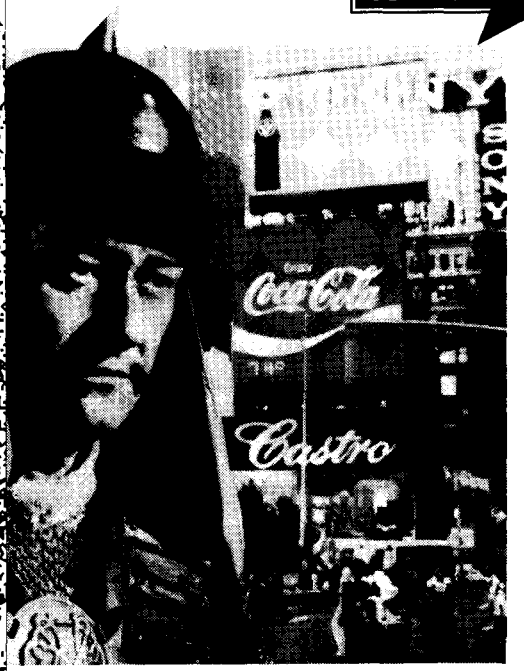

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the strategy was lent credence by Kevin Phillips's *The Politics of Rich and Poor*. Democrats concluded from Phillips's chronicle of Reagan-era upper-class greed that if they focused their political scorn on the wealthy, they could regain their popular majorities while carrying out urgently needed programs. Although Phillips stopped short of prescribing a strategy, the mere mention of his name became a code word for the progressive populist approach.

Florio adopted this strategy. He introduced a proposal for higher taxes, but focused it on a tax increase for the wealthiest New Jerseyans. Initially he eschewed populist rhetoric for an emphasis on "equity," but after opposition began mounting, he started citing Phillips and scoring the rich in his speeches. In an August interview Berman put it bluntly: "If Kevin Phillips is right, then Jim Florio is right."

Florio first spelled out his approach to taxes, spending, and education last spring, even before Wilentz announced the court's decision in the school funding case. It was the boldest program initiated by any governor in the last decade. "Florio has a sense of political power that one does not typically find in a governor," said David Kehler, the director of the Public Affairs Research Institute of New Jersey.

But the specifics of the program invited popular opposition. Florio proposed cutting $700 million out of the $12 billion state budget for 1991, but at the same time he called for $1 billion in new sales taxes (raising New Jersey's rate from 6 percent to 7 percent and extending its scope) and, starting the year after, $1.25 billion in new income taxes. Although the sales tax increase was regressive, Florio focused the income tax increases on the better-to-do, with rates beginning to rise for single people making more than $35,000 and couples making more than $70,000. He also promised continued property tax rebates for middle- and lower-income taxpayers—reducing the state's dependence on regressive property taxes.

There were, however, tremendous problems with the proposal. In his campaign Florio had promised an audit of state expenses and no tax increases. Now he was proposing tax increases without an audit having been completed. The effect was to highlight the tax increase and to minimize the spending cuts. Predictably, the public concluded that Florio was more interested in raising taxes than in eliminating government waste. In a poll conducted in July by the Eagelton Institute of Rutgers University, 72 percent said they thought the governor should have cut state spending more before resorting to new taxes, and only 14 percent believed he was justified in raising taxes.

Then there were the taxes themselves. According to the administration, 83 percent of New Jerseyans would not suffer a net increase in their taxes, but the first tax increase to take effect—the sales tax—fell on every New Jerseyan. The property tax reductions were extraordinarily difficult to figure out, but the upshot was that they would not occur until next year, and that part of them depended upon a district's willingness to reduce its rates as the state assumed the cost of some of its social services. There was no guarantee that homeowners' net tax bills would be lower. In the Eagelton poll, 77 percent thought Florio's plan would hurt middle-income people as well as the wealthy.

Florio's education program was destined to raise even more hackles. First announced in May, revised in early June, and then passed later that month by the legislature, it called for multibillion-dollar increases over the next decade. Florio proposed that the state spend less in 220 wealthier school districts and more in 358 poorer districts. But of the 358, five predominately black districts in Camden, Newark, Jersey City, Trenton, and Paterson would receive the bulk of the new spending—$1.3 billion over the next five years.

As expected, in *Abbott* v. *Burke*, Wilentz decreed that the state had to boost aid to the twenty-eight poorest school districts, costing an estimated $440 million the first year. In upstaging Wilentz, Florio tried to win broader political support for school reform by including aid to middle-class districts. But his plan increased dramatically the cost of school equity, and allowed public discontent with the new funding to focus on him rather than Wilentz. Instead of questioning the rationale of Wilentz's decision, they questioned Florio's rationale. And there was much to question.

Florio's approach rested on an admirable commitment to social justice, but it also rested on the dubious assumption that increased funding was the key to improving education. The educational research of the last decade has revealed, almost without exception, that increased funding has not improved education. Education cost per capita has doubled in the last decade, while by any standard measure, educational achievement in public schools has slightly declined. In New Jersey there was an additional problem. Most of the districts that would get large increases in funding were corrupt. The Kean administration had taken over Jersey City after finding that school money was being squandered in political patronage schemes and administrative salaries. According to Florio's education adviser, Thomas Corcoran, the state is now investigating similar corruption in the Paterson, Newark, Trenton, Hoboken, and Union City school districts. These districts may not be in any position to use new state funds to improve student education.

Florio acknowledges the problem, but his solution is to police the errant bureaucrats of Paterson or Newark with the new bureaucrats in Trenton. His new state commissioner, he told a meeting of skeptical supporters, was going to be his "enforcer." According to Corcoran, the state will be sending out "teams" to monitor these districts and will not allow them to receive new money until they have drafted an acceptable plan for its use.

Florio rejected an alternative strategy that is being promoted nationally by liberals and conservatives. This would couple increases in funding with changes in the structure of school administration to make teachers and

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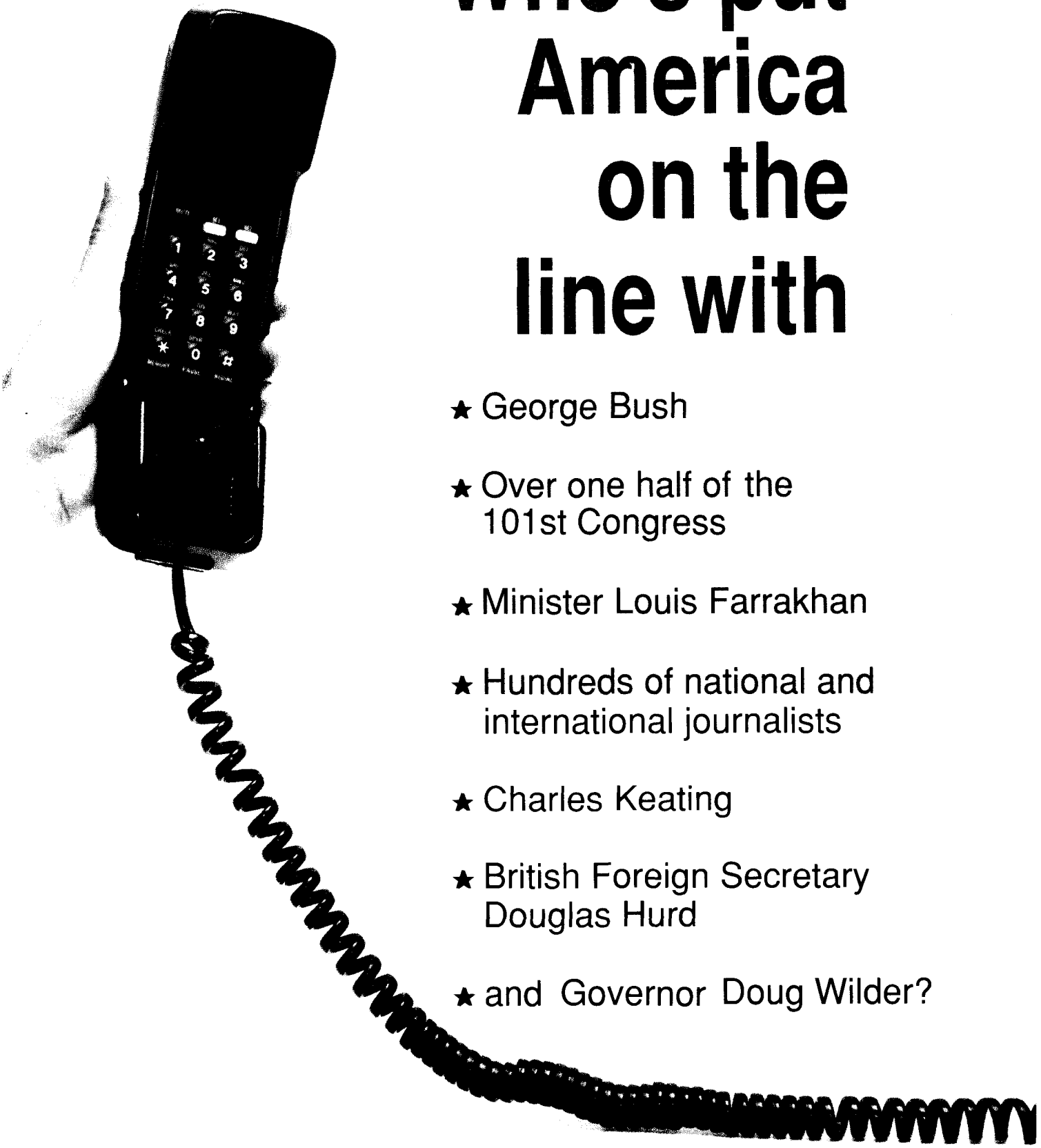
Who's put America on the line with



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- ★ British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd
- ★ and Governor Doug Wilder?

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administrators more accountable to parents and students. While opposing the *Abbott* suit, Kean and his widely respected commissioner, Saul Cooperman, had already initiated some experiments along these lines, allowing school dropouts to transfer to a different school district and bored eleventh- and twelfth-graders to attend college, and requiring school districts to send a "report card" of school achievement home to parents. But Florio ousted Cooperman and curtailed his experiments. The message was clear: the bureaucrats would be in charge.

New Jerseyans reacted to Florio's approach with predictable horror. It was another example, they noted, of "throwing money at problems." As for Florio's promise to have his school commissioner ride herd on the school districts, even his strongest supporters expressed dismay. John Atlas, chairman of New Jersey Citizens Action, says, "It's ridiculous to have a Trenton bureaucrat overlooking them."

Florio's education proposal, combined with his tax program, had the unfortunate effect of reinforcing racial divisions in the electorate and of splitting his own base. Whereas most blacks supported the plan, most whites saw it as another ill-fated scheme to get them to fund blacks. Historian Fred Siegel, who spent the last school year at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, wrote in *The Trenton Times*: "The undertow pulling Florio down is the feeling that the middle class is being asked once again to subsidize the black underclass, with no promise of success."

To compound his problems, Florio, mimicking Roosevelt's Hundred Days, rammed both the tax and education programs through the legislature with virtually no discussion. In past years each government department head had appeared before legislative committees to justify budget requests, but Florio insisted that Berman make the only appearance on the administration's behalf. Then he made sure his lieutenants limited floor debate on his proposals—among the most far-reaching in New Jersey's history.

The Florio administration also made little effort to explain its extremely complicated tax and educational proposals to the press. This allowed the opposition to define the issues and to highlight the anomalies in the programs. "We left a void that became filled with misinformation," one administration member acknowledged.

The administration's inept public relations program reflected a certain arrogance on the part of Florio and his officials. One top state Democrat described Berman, a former corporate lawyer who worked on Senator Bill Bradley's 1976 campaign and managed Florio's 1989 effort, as a "typical arrogant elitist." But it also reflected the good-government, technocratic side of Florio that had been submerged in his high-tech television election campaign against Courter. As Florio admitted when asked about his failures in selling his program: "I am not overly enthusiastic about a lot of theater."

The state has been in an uproar ever since Florio's program passed, and there is no sign yet that the clamor will abate. Most likely, it will continue through the legislative elections scheduled for next year.

The revolt was sparked by a high-powered FM radio station in Trenton that had just initiated a format of talk and music and was scouring the state for listeners. In the news round-up, John Kobylt and Ken Chiampou, who held down the 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. slot, began highlighting boondoggles and freeloading by New Jersey legislators. Both Kobylt and Chiampou are stereotypical baby boomers in their political views: they think most politicians are hopelessly corrupt and government imbued with waste, but they also support gun control and civil rights and have contempt for right-wing evangelicals. Chiampou insists they had no animus against Florio. "John and I are not anti-Florio," he says. "We are anti-politician. Special interests get the attention of politicians, and a lot of people can suffer."

One June afternoon, after ridiculing state legislators for spending $7,250 on gold badges for themselves, they received a call on the air from John Budzash, a thirty-five-year-old postman, who was angry about Florio's tax increases, which he believed were unnecessary. Kobylt and Chiampou challenged him to do something about it, and Budzash agreed to give out his phone number so that other listeners who wanted to organize a protest could call him. Budzash's phone did not stop ringing for a week. Along with Pat Ralston, a forty-six-year-old unemployed realtor, Budzash pulled together a new organization, Hands Across New Jersey, and on July 1, only a week after he had called the station, brought 5,000 people to Trenton to protest the governor's tax plans. By August Budzash and Ralston, who had never been active in politics, had coordinators in twenty-one counties circulating a petition demanding the repeal of Florio's tax package, an audit of state expenditures, and the establishment of recall and initiative procedures. By September 23, when 4,000 people rallied again in Trenton, Budzash and Ralston claimed to have gathered 950,000 signatures.

Administration officials dismiss the Hands Across New Jersey organizers as dedicated malcontents, but they represent a significant segment of New Jersey and middle-class voters. Like Kobylt and Chiampou, Budzash is a transplanted '60s radical, railing against government and politicians. Budzash is a Democrat and Ralston a Reagan Republican who voted for Florio because she thought he would reduce the auto insurance rates. And their view of Florio and his tax program is reflected in opinion polls. In the Eagelton Institute's poll, taken after the legislature passed Florio's program, 68 percent of respondents gave Florio a "poor" or "only fair" grade as a governor and only 13 percent backed his tax program.

Around the state, blacks are the only segment of the electorate that wholeheartedly backs Florio's tax and education programs. Florio still retains the loyalty of many Italian voters, but largely on ethnic rather than political grounds. Like other middle-class voters, they are skeptical of Florio's programs. Recently, when a

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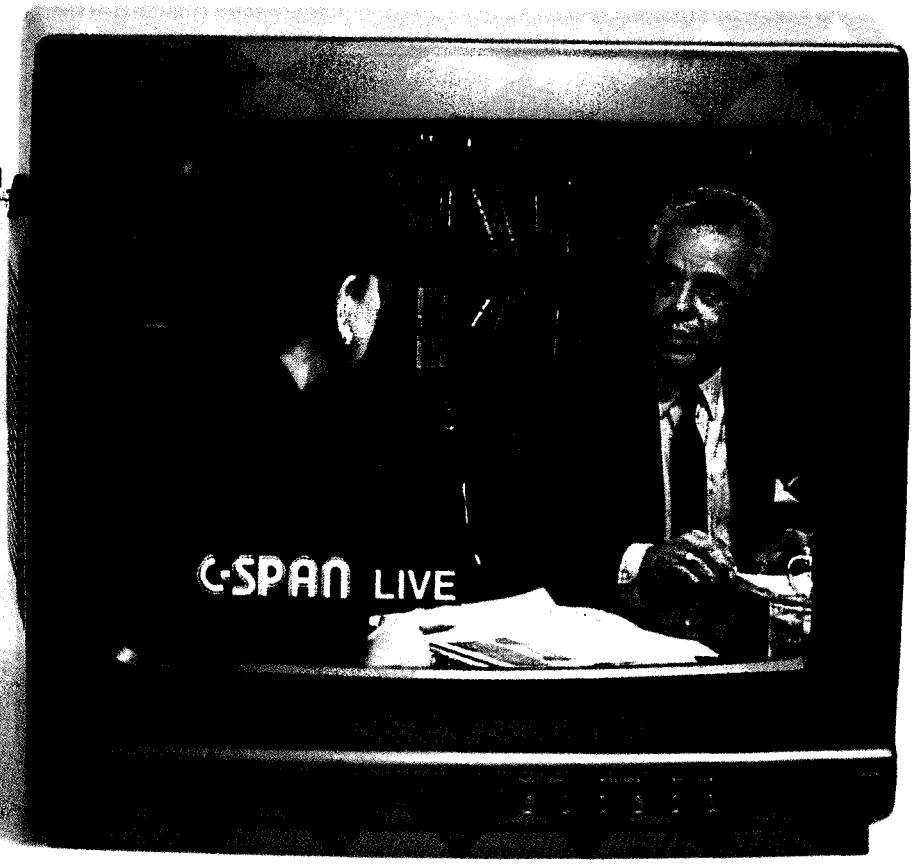

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Fleeing Florio

Marguerite Chandler, the Democratic candidate for an open House seat in northern New Jersey, has a new enemy, and it's not her Republican opponent, Dick Zimmer. It's Democratic Governor Jim Florio and his breathtakingly unpopular tax increase. Chandler is airing a sixty-second radio ad that declares: "She's running for Congress and against the Florio tax increase." Chandler has made opposition to new taxes the centerpiece of her campaign. When she announced last March, she insisted a tax increase was not needed, either in Trenton or Washington. Today she says, "I still do not believe we need to raise taxes." Her anti-tax message has left Zimmer whining that she's stolen his issue—a Republican issue.

She has. And so have a lot of other Democratic candidates this year. President Bush has jettisoned his no-new-taxes pledge, but Democrats are discovering the pledge is politically useful. In Indiana Jill Long won a special election last year to Dan Quayle's old House seat. If she hadn't flatly rejected any and all tax hikes, "I probably wouldn't have won," she says. Running for re-election now, she vows to vote against "any budget agreement that has any tax increase in it." Even Republican Whip Newt Gingrich won't go that far. Long's anti-tax fervor is paying off. In a solidly Republican district, she's opened up a double-digit lead over her GOP challenger.

In Washington, the Democratic Party hasn't changed much on taxes. Senate and House leaders are seeking a budget compromise with new taxes in it. On September 15 the Democratic National Committee spurned a no-new-taxes resolution offered by Paul Goldman, the Virginia Democratic chairman. But outside Washington, Democrats have grown tired of being pilloried as big taxers. In House races, they've been encouraged by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (OK, it's Washington-based) to make the tax issue their own. Richard Bates, the DCCC's executive director, says Chandler is "real smart" to split with Florio. "I'd tell her to run as far away from Florio as she can."

Democrats have also seized another old reliable of Republicans, cutting "waste" from the budget. Goldman, the noisiest party chairman in the nation, says that Governor Mario Cuomo is turning to budget cuts and away from new taxes. He cites a newspaper report that Cuomo is considering deep spending cuts next year to balance the New York budget. Cuomo supposedly wants to prove that Governor Douglas Wilder of Virginia isn't the only Democrat who can balance a budget without raising taxes. This, says Goldman, brings Cuomo into the "new mainstream" with Wilder, "where budgets are balanced by cutting government waste, unnecessary spending, and reordering priorities, instead of heaping additional and regressive tax burdens on the people."

In Nebraska, Democrat Sandy Scofield couples the tax and spending issues, GOP-fashion, in her race for an open House seat. "Washington shouldn't be talking about raising taxes until we can get our spending under control," she says. The Grace Commission report, which President Reagan often extolled as a blueprint for paring the federal bureaucracy, is being revived by Democrats. By following its recommendations, says Long, about $150 billion frittered away through "waste and mismanagement" can be trimmed from the budget. Chandler talks up both the Grace report and a study by the General Accounting Office. The GAO, she says, found that "as much as $424 billion could be saved in three years if productivity and program assessments were made in government."

Democrats began turning the tables on Republicans on the tax issue in off-year elections in 1989. Both Wilder and Florio were elected after insisting they had no plans to boost taxes. Wilder had immunized himself on the tax issue as lieutenant governor by opposing a sales tax hike in 1986. As governor, Wilder rejected another increase in the sales tax when he encountered a $1.4 billion budget shortfall in August. "I will make unprecedented cuts in spending while at the same time holding the line against any new taxes," Wilder announced. He told agency heads that if they couldn't find things to cut, he would. They complied. Now he's getting praise from unusual sources (for a Democrat). Lawrence Hunter of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce touts Wilder as being of presidential caliber. "Using the Wilder formula (a 5.3 percent spending cut), Congress could lower projected federal spending for 1991 by $72 billion," Hunter said. But "leaders of Wilder's caliber seem non-existent in Washington," he said.

Not entirely. Nearly all the Democrats who won special House elections last year promised to vote against tax increases—Long in Indiana, Glenn Browder in Alabama, Pete Geren in Texas, Gene Taylor in Mississippi. This year the DCCC has urged Democrats to label Republicans as high taxers. A DCCC bulletin to candidates says that "Republicans have spent the last ten years raising taxes and they're still doing it," especially Bush. Democrats "are justified in demanding the repeal of the unfair taxes that are breaking the backs of the middle class and the poor."

Rosa DeLauro, a candidate for an open House seat in Connecticut, is one Democrat who's acted on this advice. She's pledged to oppose both "new taxes on working- and middle-class Americans" and "political games that raise their taxes via the back door." DeLauro opposes a gasoline tax hike and wants to restore IRAs for the middle class. The tax break for IRAs, by the way, is a Democratic favorite this year. Jim Moran, the Democrat challenging Republican Representative Stan Parris in Northern Virginia, is pro-IRA ("I'd double it to $3,000") and anti-tax. "We don't need to raise taxes," he says. "A trillion is enough to pay for the government."

In governors' races, opposition to tax increases has given Democrat Joan Finney a strong lead over Republican Governor Mike Hayden of Kansas, and has put Democrat Neil Hartigan in a dead heat with Republican Jim Edgar in Illinois. Finney is anti-abortion, but that hasn't hurt her candidacy. A poll in August showed that taxes are swamping abortion as an issue (Hayden's problem is property taxes). Hartigan pulled practically even with Edgar after airing a TV spot concentrating on Edgar's desire to make permanent a temporary state income tax surcharge of 20 percent.

No Democrat is relying more on anti-tax sentiment than Chandler, a tax accountant who also owns an industrial park. She's not "another candidate lying" about taxes. She's "different," Chandler says in her radio ad. "I know how to subtract as well as add."

FRED BARNES

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group of ethnic, labor, and community group leaders met to rally support behind Florio, the only thing they could agree on was that the governor should rescind some of his sales tax increases.

Florio and his advisers expected some opposition to their programs, but they thought it would dissipate as New Jerseyans headed toward the shore. They were shocked by the extent of the reaction. "We expected to be hit by a Volkswagen, but not by a Mack truck," one official said. Yet well after the protests began and their own polls showed a precipitate decline in the governor's popularity, they still refuse to grant legitimacy to their opponents.

Publicly, they blame the protest on the usual lobbies. "The real public clamor is not spontaneous," Florio explained in an interview. "Obviously, the Republican Party and the NRA have something to do with it." But it's not obvious that Republican politicians have had anything to do with Hands Across New Jersey. And though the National Rifle Association, which was angry at Florio for banning assault rifles, has jumped on the anti-tax bandwagon, it could not have done so had not Budzash and Ralston already gotten it moving.

Privately, administration officials believe they are being victimized by a racist reaction. Indeed, as the protest goes on, and as blacks appear as the governor's only steadfast supporters, the issue has taken on an ugly racial tinge. When some of Florio's opponents explain their distaste for his education program, hostility toward blacks quickly surfaces. In an interview one Hands Across New Jersey leader said of the money given to black schools, "They can give them $50 million for computers. The damn kids are so stupid they can't read the instruction books." But the protest also has a rational core, based upon a decade of educational experience and research. And for every person swinging a racial ax, there are others like Atlas who have a longtime commitment to civil rights but still question Florio's program.

In response to the protest, Florio has begun shaking up his administration. He replaced his chief of staff, Steven Perskie, a former Superior Court judge and policy intellectual, with his former congressional chief of staff, Joseph Salema, a political veteran with a more popular touch. But some Democrats want him to go further and get rid of Berman, the architect of the tax plan.

Florio also has decided to step up the populist rhetoric. He now regularly quotes Phillips and mocks the plight of the residents of the town of Alpine, whose average income is $418,000 a year. But as long as New Jerseyans harbor questions about the tax plan's impact and about the administration's education program and war on waste, Florio's populist rhetoric is likely to have little effect. Indeed, populism—unless it is directed at specific malefactors—has little appeal. There is no evidence that New Jerseyans or other Americans harbor a general grudge against the rich.

Florio is also trying to defuse the racial issue. When he cites the advantages of his education program, he no longer speaks of social justice or mentions the program's benefits to Newark or Paterson, arguing instead that it will make New Jerseyans better able to compete with the Japanese and Germans. By itself, such an argument makes sense, but it fails to meet the objection that Florio's program will make New Jersey neither more just nor more competitive. Indeed, among Florio's opponents it has inspired a widely quoted ditty that, in condensed form, goes like this:

> Three thousand years ago Moses said, "Pack your camel, pick up your shovel, mount your ass, and I will lead you to the promised land." Today, Jim Florio will tax your shovel, sell your camel, kick your ass, and tell you that the promised land is in Japan.

Florio hopes that voters will get tired of protesting his tax and education programs—perhaps, as the income and property tax reforms take hold, they will even come to accept them. Berman and Florio point to the experience of Florio's two predecessors, Kean and Brendan Byrne, both of whom raised taxes and initially faced voter discontent, and went on to win re-election. But both Kean and Byrne benefited from subsequent prosperity, while Florio faces the prospect of a recession. And Kean's tax increase was not joined to a controversial educational program.

Florio's supporters believe that Republicans are almost certain to recapture the Assembly and Senate in 1991. Worse still, they fear that Florio could damage Democratic prospects for a decade to come. As one prominent Democrat puts it, "If Florio doesn't succeed, he is going to be the Jimmy Carter of the '90s. People are going to be running against Jim Florio Democrats."

Some liberals say Florio has stumbled because he didn't follow progressive populism to the letter. One leader of Citizens Action argues that Florio would be in good shape today if he had followed their advice and closed corporate tax loopholes rather than raising the sales tax. Florio's problem lay not merely in the details of his tax increases, but in the broader political assumptions that underlay both his tax and education programs.

To have succeeded, Florio minimally would have had to establish his commitment to cutting government waste before proposing increases in taxes; and he would have had to present an education program that went significantly beyond "throwing money at problems." In other words, he would have had to acknowledge the deep skepticism that New Jerseyans feel about old-style liberalism and its economic and social programs. That skepticism has been manifested this year not only in New Jersey, but in Massachusetts and Washington, D.C., as well. And he would have had to build popular support for his programs rather than relying on FDR-style quick strikes, and on citations from the politics of rich and poor.

Florio's embrace of old-style liberalism in the form of progressive populism inevitably meant trouble. For all his good intentions, his experiment in New Jersey did not represent the cutting edge of the future, but rather the dull ache of the past. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Aftermath, and After

Bertrand Tavernier almost makes me weep. What a magnificent talent he has. What an important tradition he carries on—unsentimental, slightly cynical, bitterly hopeful humanism. What feasts for the eye, what enlargements of experience he gives us. His career ought to be garlanded with masterpieces. But—and I've seen all but one of his twelve films, several of them more than once—he has made only two truly complete films, *The Clockmaker* and *A Week's Vacation*. Both are contemporary works, fine and pertinent, but small-scale. His films of larger scope, his historical films, falter variously. Two of them, *Let Joy Reign Supreme* and *The Judge and the Assassin*, just miss—but they do miss—being world-class masterpieces. (His ventures into jazz, *'Round Midnight* and *Mississippi Blues*, are lesser works, merely more evidence of that perennial European envy of American pop culture.)

Tavernier's **Life and Nothing But** (Orion Classics) was shown at the 1989 New York Film Festival and has taken a year to find an American distributor. It's another occasion for the special, ruefully complimentary sadness about Tavernier. The very first moments tell us that we are in the hands of a master. The closing moments tell us that the master has once again created a beautiful film without a clear idea of how it was going to finish.

In *The Judge and the Assassin*, which is one of the best re-creations of a historical period that I know, Tavernier dramatized anti-Dreyfusard feelings in 1894 through a murder case in a small town, stressing his recurrent theme that nominal criminals do not commit the worst crimes against society; but he ended with some glib revolutionary posturing that diminished what had gone before. In *Let Joy Reign Supreme*, he followed virtually the same pattern with a drama of the early eighteenth-century Regency.

This time Tavernier's focus is the aftermath of World War I, the cataclysm that rubbed the noses of programmed meliorists in reality—or, to put it otherwise, confirmed the arrival of the twentieth century. The first sequence, set in October 1920, tells us that the film's title is not a matter of smiling through tears. We see shots of the ocean before and between credits. Then there's a long shot of an immense beach—introducing us to the muted colors in Bruno de Keyser's camera—with two riders in the distance. As they approach, we hear a woman urging the other rider to sit up straight. They get closer, and we see that one of them is a nun, riding sidesaddle, and the other is a soldier. He falls off his horse; he is legless.

Tavernier has stated his theme, simply, forcefully, uniquely. His sense of flow, another of his characteristics, comes into play at once. A limousine drives by, and the chauffeur asks the nun for directions to a military hospital. We follow the car as it leaves and meet the woman in the back, a wealthy young widow, played by Sabine Azema, who is looking for the remains of her officer husband. Her search leads her to a center for finding and identifying the bodies of the 350,000 missing French soldiers. The officer in charge of this center is played by Philippe Noiret, whom Tavernier calls his "autobiographical actor." (This is Noiret's hundredth film, his seventh with Tavernier. I've read that Noiret turned down several offers in order to make his hundredth with Tavernier.)

Paralleling Azema's search is that of a local schoolteacher, Pascale Vignal, who is searching for the remains of her lover. Vignal loses her teaching job to a returned soldier, and, working as a waitress, meets Azema.

Their concerns become part of Noiret's immense job, but his foreground projects just now are, first, to excavate a railway tunnel in which a troop train was buried by bombs during the war and, second, to provide a suitable candidate corpse for the honor of being chosen the Unknown Soldier.

Fundamentally, however, the film is about the silence after the shrieking horror of the war. This is underscored by the quiet, almost humble way in which relatives come to this center, hoping to identify things like wallets, pipes, lockets that are tagged with the numbers of nameless corpses; and by the subdued air of all the soldiers under Noiret's command. A counterpoint, another characteristic of Tavernier, who wrote the screenplay with Jean Cosmos, is the theme of class, delineated here by Azema, daughter-in-law of a powerful senator, and Vignal,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dreams. *Akira Kurosawa presents eight episodes drawn from dreams he has had. Only four are up to his best, but all of them connote themes from his past. (Reviewed 10/8/90)* **The Icicle Thief.** *Deft, charming Italian fantasy-comedy, mixing present-day color and 1950s black and white. Maurizio Nichetti, author-actor-director, gives current TV a too-well-deserved nudge. (10/1/90)* **Postcards from the Edge.** *Meryl Streep having a wonderful time and giving us one, as a minor Hollywood star, fighting drugs, self, and mom. Mom, also an actress, played to catty perfection by Shirley MacLaine. Mike Nichols, the director, does sleight of hand. (10/8/90)* **Pretty Woman.** *Still the best piffle around. Julia Roberts winning as an LA hooker, Richard Gere engaging as her tycoon-patron. (4/16/90)* **—SK**

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the schoolteacher-waitress, who are joined at least temporarily by their search among the dead.

Through more than three-quarters of the film, Tavernier moves magisterially, developing his material with a kind of respectful insight, with ever-present overtones of grimness and futility. (The sequence in which the Unknown Soldier is chosen ought to make *all* the dead arise.) But, as so often before, he simply doesn't know what he is moving toward. He doesn't know how to resolve his film in consonance with its gravity and art. The twinned stories of the two young women are tied off with a touch of boulevard cleverness that is reductive. The main drama—Noiret's determination to make his country face what has happened, to stamp the world's conscience with responsibility—is wheedled off into a love story.

Noiret falls in love with Azema in the course of the film, which is credible enough. Toward the end she tells him that he has only to speak the words and she is his. But he cannot; and his fear—sexual or emotional impotence or both—separates them. The conclusion of the film is a letter from Noiret two years later, read on the sound track. He is now retired to his country place and writes to Azema in New York, hoping that he will soon be able to say the words and fulfill their love. The letter contains one ironic reference to the war, his comment that the Victory parade on the Champs-Elysées took three hours and that if all the dead had marched it would have taken eleven days. Otherwise, this long, rich, marvelously made work about one of the enormities of our century ends in magazine-romance chat about the longings of a middle-aged man for a young woman who, for some reason, is still interested in him. It's as if the camera had done a long slow pan across Picasso's *Guernica* to a pleasant pastel.

About Tavernier's directing as such, there can be no cavil. Almost always in early morning or late afternoon light, he moves his camera so persistently, so engagingly, that we almost seem to be "entering" the story with it. He has an eye for striking shots, but he never uses them for display. When he shoots at ground level, it's because this is the best way to include two widely separated elements. A long section of the film takes place in an abandoned factory and the living quarters attached. The people move amid huge machines. Tavernier lets frame after frame print themselves on our minds as cold symbols of power, all of them pressed more deeply when we learn why the factory was not bombed by the Germans during the war.

His actors fill the screen with life.

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Noiret is not just Tavernier's autobiographical actor: in certain large ways, he is everyone's, male or female. Azema and Vignal give clearly defined performances. The voices of all the actors, particularly those of the men, are so lovely that Oswald d'Andrea's score, excellent in itself, is almost an accompaniment to them. But after bringing all these beautiful elements together, Tavernier has once again given us an unfinished symphony. •

What Karen Finley really does.

Blood and Chocolate

By Luc Sante

Anybody who has read a newspaper in the last six months knows what Karen Finley does on stage. While delivering monologues, she slathers her nude body with various substances. This description is accurate as far as it goes, and from familiarity with the description many people may feel they know as much as they need to know about Finley's work to be qualified to pass judgment upon it. The act sounds freakish and unwholesome in a very particular way, some combination of the stag show and the soapbox speech. A performance that mingles titillation and invective—communistic striptease! If you wanted to market provocation, could you do any better?

More sophisticated newspaper readers might be just as likely to harbor prejudices against Finley and her work without experiencing it directly. For one thing, performance art has never succeeded in finding much of an audience outside the art world, and even people vaguely acquainted with it may regard the form as a floundering simulation of theater by scenemakers who know nothing about theater. For another, such excerpts from the texts of Finley's monologues as have appeared in print, as illustrative quotes in journalistic accounts, sound barefaced and hectoring, in a way that preaches to the converted and alienates the rest, and risks making even sympathizers feel unconstructively guilty and excluded.

But context is everything, and in this case there are several. There is the context of the current era of polarized opinion, when a feminist like Finley feels pushed to drastic measures or at least drastic metaphors, and the religious right finds it convenient to isolate such imagery from context and use it as a public-relations bludgeon. There is the context of the media, always hungry for color and therefore unimpeded by considerations of context in presenting the most outrageously memorable picture or sentence from any complex event and making it represent the whole. And there is the context of performance itself—any performance, whether performance art, or Elizabethan tragedy, or raree-show, or comic opera, or holy-roller revival—in which word and image work in the service of and are subordinate to the gestures, tone, character, and aura of the person or persons actually onstage. A staged performance cannot usefully be quoted—not even on film—without doing some violence to its chemistry and integrity.

The first two of these points of context may be obvious, but the third is no less critical. Finley is a singular performer who accomplishes something on the stage that is not easily reducible to mere polemic. It is not irrelevant, for example, that she immediately establishes an easy rapport with the audience—a rare thing in performance art, where the tone often tends toward the chilly, the arch, or the adversarial. At the beginning of her current touring work, *We Keep Our Victims Ready*, she ambles out onstage in conventional clothes, with a towel wrapped around her head, settles in a rocking chair stage left, and just begins to talk. The talk is her warm-up act; she rambles on pleasantly until both she and the audience achieve a relaxed suspension.

When she segued into the first of her three "acts" (independent units, actually) on the night I saw her in Cambridge, the transition was abrupt. Her posture stiffened and her voice rose in pitch and volume. Her speech took on a pronounced twang, and it was further colored by a stylized delivery, in which each line began with an audible aspiration and

LUC SANTE's book about the turn-of-the-century New York demimonde, *Low Life*, will be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux next spring.

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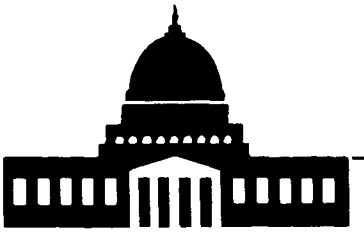
most ended with a grunt or a "yeah": she was employing the hypnotic rhythms of a revival preacher. She seemed to be working herself into a trance state, but the state was not attainable all at once; and she snapped out of character to make jokes and comments in her conversational voice. As she got deeper into it the jokes ceased, and she began to play her preacher voice like a musical instrument, varying the pitch, broadening and narrowing the accent.

This first number, "Life of Lies," is an unsubtle satire, a parable of the state of the nation under a complete censorship of the arts. (She stated that the piece had been written before the current NEA controversy.) Some of the lines were better than others. There was a certain visceral power in her notion that museums would no longer possess toilets because people might confuse urine with art, or that hot dogs would be banned because, as her image of Jesse Helms puts it, "In this country we don't eat anything longer than it's wide." Many of the jokes were feeble, but the piece so gave the impression of having been made up on the spot that weak lines seemed understandable.

It was disconcerting, therefore, to read the version that appears in *Shock Treatment*, the collection of Finley's monologues that City Lights will publish later this fall, and find the text of the performance rendered nearly verbatim. While it is said that she never rehearses and never performs a routine the same way twice, this legend seems both self-protective and a bow to the performance-art shibboleth of spontaneity. It is unfortunate that she doesn't use the laboratory of the stage to shape and to strengthen her texts. Surely she could come up with a better line when, in the course of a catalog of explanations as to why certain artists have been banned, she cites Georgia O'Keeffe "for painting cow skulls (the dairy industry complained)," this of a woman who has long been said by both admirers and enemies to have painted vaginas in the guise of flowers.

The story concludes with a visiting group of foreign dignitaries demanding to see the country's modern art, so that the embarrassed conservatives have to resort to producing it themselves. When they do, all sorts of monsters rise from the id and turn up on their canvases, whereupon the police arrive and arrest all of them. Actually, one suspects, the most censorious conservatives would not be the least bit swayed by foreign pressure. The piece might have been more effective in any number of ways—scenarios leap to mind.



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Too bad Finley doesn't have an editor.

The mood at the conclusion of the first number was jolly, and it became jollier still when Finley took off her dress to reveal a splendid undergarment, vintage 1955 or so. Finley has a gift for physical comedy that has gone largely unremarked; she can get laughs with minimal inflections and postures. In her underwear she looked like a Mack Sennett bathing beauty, and she topped off the effect by pouring gelatin into the bra cups and jiggling, with a deadpan walk that had the audience howling. Then, after some foolery that had her tossing props into the crowd, she stripped, took up a heart-shaped bonbon box filled with melted chocolate, and smeared the front of her body with it, from neck to knees.

This was done solemnly; there was no comedy about it, certainly no titillation. The action was unmistakably ceremonial, like that of a Dogon priest covering his body with ashes. Finley is a tall woman, with a mutable face that never seems to look the same in any two photographs. Her face is a great asset to her performance as it, more than anything else about her, cues the mood. Her wide, thin-lipped mouth, which splits into a broad grin when she is telling jokes, becomes a straight line, a statuary element, when she is being solemn, and then it seems to hurl itself open when she is possessed by anger or grief. She becomes oracular, a medium.

The tone of her second act, "Why Can't This Veal Calf Walk," was distinctly oracular. It was conceived as a sort of collage of many voices of women, a cascade of cris de coeur from diverse personalities, and as Finley delivered it the effect was less of a harangue than of a séance. The voices slipped in and out of register, blurring and then suddenly becoming vivid. An abused and frustrated wife becomes Finley herself, memorializing women killed by sexual violence, and then an alcoholic mother, then a pregnant teenager. Finley's incantatory style allows her to make even some very obvious or ungainly lines sound powerful; for example, a section that begins, "It's my body/It's not Pepsi's body/It's not Nancy Reagan's body/It's not Congress's body/It's not the Supreme Court's body . . . ," may not play all that well on paper, but resounds on the stage with a steely oratorical force.

She didn't succeed in keeping the dynamic under control, however, and there were times when her affected Midwestern or Southern drawl sounded at variance with what she was actually saying, taking on the cartoonish inflection of a bull-necked sheriff when the words were those of a woman in pain. The overall effect, though, was of unmediated and uncalculated emotion, as if the speeches were coming out of her of their own volition, so that the question of how well she succeeded in any given passage seemed beside the point. Three times she stopped in the course of this routine and very deliberately applied a new substance to her body: first jimmies, those little decorative candies sprinkled on icing, then alfalfa sprouts, representing sperm, and then tinsel. By the time she was done she looked no more nude than if she had donned successive layers of shawls.

The idea was that each new matter dumped over her body represented a different sort of violation perpetrated on women's bodies—the repressive effect of religion, the fear of healthy sexuality and its replacement by exploitative and abusive sex, the soul-murder of rape. The text moved around in semi-random fashion, from a complaint about the unavailability of health insurance, to a catalog of doubts about the idea of love, to a listing of parallels between the Nazi regime and today's abuse of power in America, to the strong but strangely underemphasized metaphor of the title: the plight of the veal calf, crammed into an undersized pen, injected with antibiotics, and forced to live in its own excrement until it's butchered. As Finley careened between tones, hitting and missing her targets with equal fervor, her voice, keeping to a rhythmic pulse, flicked up and down through scales of timbre and intensity as if it were picking up different radio signals. Except when she was applying her various symbolic wounds, she stood rigid, as if taken over by a loa.

When assessing Finley's work, it is important to keep in mind the nature of performance art—that it has a history and a tradition, and that it is not a name stuck onto a failed attempt to make something else. It is neither poetry nor dance, and while it is manifestly a form of theater, it does not issue from the dramatic mainstream of the past century. Performance art is a natural extension of the ideas on visual art expounded by modernist schools beginning with the Dadaists and Futurists. Picabia's nailing a stuffed monkey to a board and labeling it "Portrait of Cézanne" found its correlative in Arthur Cravan's taking down his pants before a group of society people who were expecting to hear a talk on art. Decades later, Jackson Pollock's violent spattering of pigment on canvas was logically answered by Hermann Nitsch's dismembering of bovine carcasses on stage, bathing the room in blood. If modern art seemed safe, performance art was a way of taking its premises and making them unsafe. It was not so much a matter of upsetting the bourgeoisie as of rattling even the artists themselves, continually injecting risk and danger into a form that threatened to become merely comestible, making art that was unpurchasable, unpackageable, impossible to reproduce, and incapable of dignifying the boardrooms of corporations.

Finley has substantial roots in this tradition. She studied at the San Francisco Art Institute, a performance stronghold for several decades, and her former husband was one of the Kipper Kids, two grown men who, clad in bathing caps, jockstraps, and false noses, smeared each other with food and carried on in similarly regressive fashion at a time (the mid-1970s) when gallery art was at its coolest and most theoretical. Still, Finley has stated that she did not get fully involved in performance art until, when she was home visiting on a break during art school, her father went out to the garage and shot himself. The shock of the event made her want not to work in solitude, and it made her want to act out. Today her work remains full of references to the suicide, and "Why Can't This Veal Calf Walk" features voices that might be those of her father, explaining his act, and her mother, or someone like her, reeling from the consequences. The way she uses such autobiographical material provides a key to her work. She does not impersonate her characters, or set them in a landscape, or discuss them impartially, or seek to solve their dilemmas. Rather, she allows herself to be seized by their emotions, to be ridden like a horse by them, in an attempt at exorcism.

Here she is operating not only within the context of performance art, but continuing another, far older line, a distinctly female tradition that links the Delphic voice with those of medieval witches and nineteenth-century spiritualists and twentieth-century automatic writers. Of course, those women did not claim to be artists, and Finley does not claim contact with the unseen world, but the line between art and the sacred is a thin one, its placement defined by social context at any given time. It is also true that Finley's work is not automatic or spontaneous or unmediated. It is written (although seemingly unrevised, in an uncomfortable compromise with spontaneity), and it alternates streams of floating voices with her own voice, in an antiphony that approaches a verse-chorus structure. This form in part accounts for the theatrical power of her rhetoric; her slogans and declarations, following upon the overlapping and contradictory testimonies of other voices, are heightened by their contrasting simplicity and clarity, and thus ring out.

In her writing and thinking, Finley is unsophisticated and rather lazy. She is

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also hampered by the willful artlessness that is the hallmark of her artistic generation, a fear that too much polishing might make for contrivance or even dishonesty. She is uncomfortable with metaphors and tends not to follow them up, hesitates at imagining very fully the details of the lives of those received voices, goes for the big crude effect every time, as if she fears that dealing in finer distinctions might undermine her position. Her comparison between Nazi Germany and the present-day United States on the matter of intolerance, particularly vis-à-vis AIDS, is an example of the easy, hollow rhetoric to which she is drawn. The accusation of fascism has been so overemployed through the years that it is now all but meaningless. There actually are echoes of Hitlerian thinking in some of the right-wing responses to the AIDS crisis, such as the suggestions that sufferers be tatooed or put into camps, but wrapping the whole complex matter in an across-the-board image that by now raises only a weak jerk of the knee obscures the chilling reality of the public treatment of AIDS—bureaucratic evasion, commercial chicanery, ecclesiastical duplicity.

In general, Finley seems uncomfortable with language. Words for her are no more than a means to an end, a convention to be endured rather than appreciated, their power something to be dodged rather than exploited. Her work is almost impossible to quote, since each phrase is an unprepossessing brick that depends on all the others for substance and impact, and that is not realized except in performance. Her fixation on scatology is only intermittently interesting, pee-pee and doo-doo imagery having lost all power except among the kind of people who would be deaf to her work anyway, but it seems compulsive rather than designed to shock; as a friend remarked, she sounds like someone afflicted with Tourette's syndrome. Finley needs to learn what all the great slapstick comedians knew, that loss of control requires a great deal of control.

For her last act Finley wrapped herself in a sheet, brought the lights down low, and sat by the side of a bed stage right. This piece, "Departure," contrasted with the others by being subdued and meditative, considering the death of loved ones from AIDS and the horrible numbness induced by multiplying funerals. At the end, in a subsection called "The Black Sheep," she stepped away from her relentless channeling of oppression to sound a more positive note, imagining an affiliation of the ostracized, banished, and marginal in a family based on choice rather than biology. In her delivery she conveyed sadness, humor, and hope, and reached a kind of anthemic fervor that brought to mind another source for her kind of performance: the rock concert.

But if the kind of demagoguery-without-a-program that rock singers sometimes indulge in seems frighteningly vapid, Finley's act is, for all its faults, seriously intended, and she articulates what many people think—and not just women and gay men in Manhattan—about sexual abuse, the abuse of power, AIDS, and the hypocrisies of official morality. Public articulation of views not held by the government or much heard on television conveys at least a symbolic power, which is better than no power at all. Finley lacks the skill to crystallize this articulation into poetry, but she has a raw and unusual talent, which makes something intangible but real happen in front of an audience. It is easy to misrepresent her work, but it is impossible to duplicate it. •

Tyrants and Butterflies

BY ROBERT ALTER

Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years by Brian Boyd

(Princeton University Press, 598 pp., $25)

I.

Toward the end of July 1934, Vladimir Nabokov wrote from Berlin, where he had been living for twelve years, to the eminent émigré poet and critic Vladislav Khodasevich, and made one of those unqualified statements in defense of art as private expression that seem to confirm him as an incorrigible aesthete and escapist. From the city that had recently become the capital of the Third Reich, to which he had been displaced from his native Petersburg by the Bolshevik Revolution,

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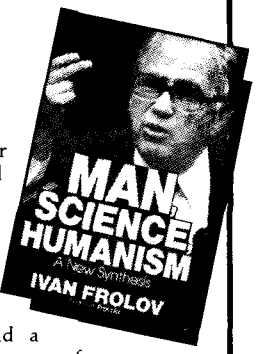

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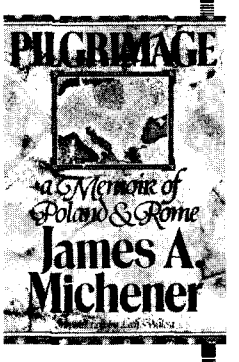

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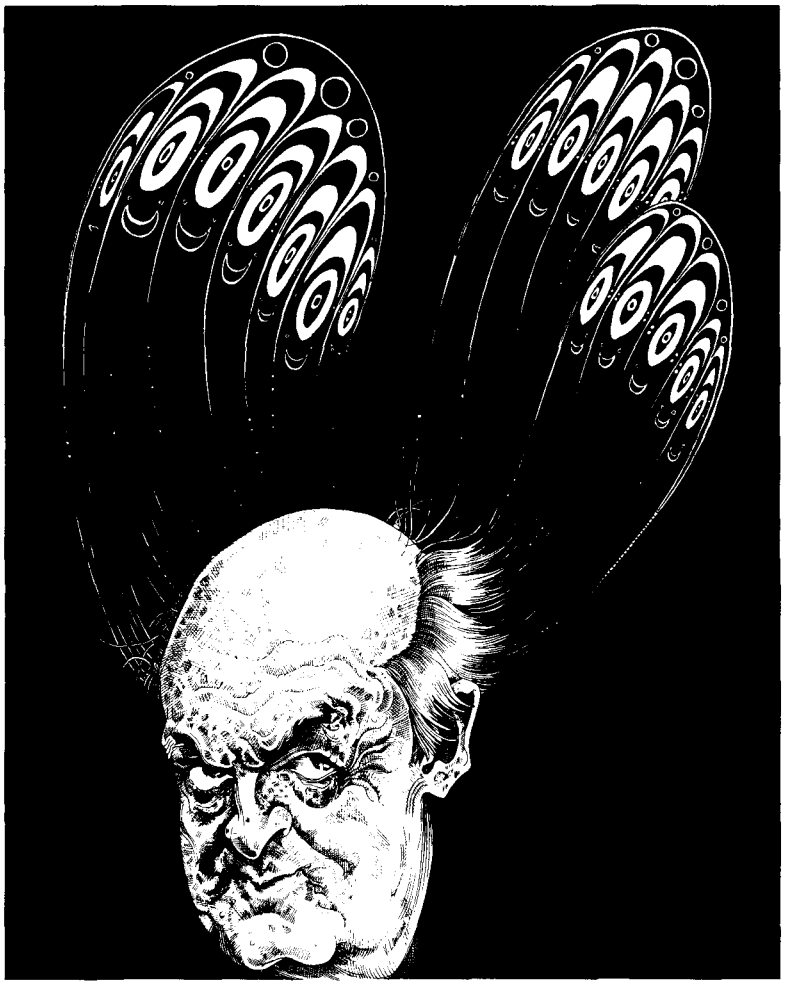
Nabokov could tell his friend that writers should "occupy themselves only with their own meaningless, innocent, intoxicating business." In all talk about "the modern era," "*inquiétude*," and "religious renaissance," in every statement that contained the word "postwar," he sensed "the same herd instinct, the 'all-together-now' of, say, yesterday's or last century's enthusiasm for world's fairs." "I am writing my novel. I do not read the papers."

All this sounds like a categorical rejection of the political realm, but it is really a refusal to contemplate the political realm on the level of fashionable formulas, with the limited language and the stunted imaginative reach of the daily press. In fact, the novel that Nabokov was working on as he wrote Khodasevich was *Invitation to a Beheading*, which conjures up an eerily revelatory fantasy world of totalitarianism. In the unlikely vehicle of nightmarish farce, the book brings together the principles of pervasive state terror shared by Hitler and Stalin. Nabokov is an exemplary writer of the century precisely because his best work challenges easy oppositions between the aesthetic and the political, between the aesthetic and the moral. He resembles the two modernists he most admired, Proust and Joyce, in attributing supreme importance to aesthetic values, but he is more like Proust in assuming that moral issues are subtly implicated in art; and for all his dedication to art, he did not have the kind of relentless self-absorption that led Joyce toward the end of his life to worry about the outbreak of a new world war only as a threat to the publication of *Finnegans Wake*. In his own experience, Nabokov had seen too painfully the terrible consequences for civilized existence of political events.

With the publication of the first volume of Brian Boyd's two-volume biography, it is now possible to get a clear picture of Nabokov's relation to Russian political and cultural history, and to the various currents of the European emigration. The clarity of the picture is especially needed because a good deal of fuzziness of detail and skewed perspective has been introduced into the public domain by Andrew Field, Nabokov's previous biographer. In his waning years, Nabokov imprudently agreed to let Field do an "authorized" biography. The result, published in 1977 (and recycled with elaborations in 1986), was mannered, coy, factually sloppy, sometimes more about Field than about Nabokov, and showed an edge of hostility that had emerged as the biographer and his subject quarreled over formulations of the draft version.



VLADIMIR NABOKOV BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Boyd, by contrast, a young literary scholar from New Zealand and the author of a brilliant critical study of Nabokov's *Ada*, has done a formidable amount of patient spadework. He has thoroughly examined the Nabokov collections at the Library of Congress and in Montreux, together with other pertinent archives, which contain a wealth of unpublished correspondence as well as some diary material. He has scrutinized the letters and the journals of everyone who came in contact with Nabokov, conducted extensive interviews with Nabokov's widow, and traveled from country to country to talk with Nabokov's sundry friends and relations.

The product of these labors is a very valuable book, though it is a little peculiar as biography. Strictly respecting Nabokov's absolute dismissal of psychological determinism, Boyd offers a chastely apsychological portrait of the writer that substitutes for psychological conjecture a kind of thematic interpretation of character. A fine critic, he chafes under the onus of biographical narration, and from the moment that Nabokov becomes a professional writer in the early 1920s, almost half of every chapter is devoted to a synopsis and a critical discussion of his stories, poems, plays, and novels.

Symptomatically, at the midpoint of this first volume the narrative is entirely set aside for twenty-nine pages devoted to an admirable chapter-long essay on "Nabokov the Writer," with examples largely drawn from the American novels, not the Russian ones. In all of this, Boyd offers insights into *The Defense*, *Invitation to a Beheading*, *The Gift*, and Nabokov's general enterprise as a writer; but the momentum of biographical report is repeatedly interrupted in a way that can be frustrating. This project bids to be an impressive thousand-page critical essay on Nabokov, rich in information about his life and its sundry contexts, but its central human figure may seem a little remote.

In one respect, however, the disproportion of Boyd's biography is justified. As he abundantly shows, Nabokov—whatever energies he devoted to his roles as son, husband, father, lover, and maneuverer among émigré social groups—was above all, in Stendhal's phrase, a "writing animal." The sheer quantity and variety of his literary output, through constant economic hardship, traumatic bereavement, romantic involvement, and occasional bouts of debilitating illness, are astounding. By the time he came to the United States in 1940 at the age of forty-one (where Boyd's first volume breaks off), he had written in Russian nine novels, two volumes of stories, four collections of verse, and several plays, not to speak of a novel

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composed in English in 1938-39, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, which was published a year after his arrival in America.

Stylistic fireworks, intricacies of formal design, cunningly encrypted games of allusion, anagram, and motif, are the hallmarks of Nabokov's fiction, but the chief power of Boyd's reading is his argument, first taken up in his book on *Ada*, that all this play with form and surface has carefully meditated metaphysical implications. Perhaps a little surprisingly, "reality" proves to be the essential term in this persuasive conception of Nabokov's imaginative undertaking. It is a term, as Nabokov himself observed more than once, that can scarcely be used without the protective cover of quotation marks. A good many readers, put off by his archness and by the mandarin touches of his prose, have assumed that Nabokov had no interest in reality, contenting himself with the admiration of his own artifice. Boyd, on the contrary, argues for an essential connection between the meticulous empiricism of Nabokov's activity as an entomologist and his concerns as a writer: "Nabokov accepted the world as real, so real that there is always more and more to know—about the scales of a butterfly wing, about a line of Pushkin."

"Always more" is the key to Nabokov's world. He assumes that the fulfillment of consciousness is in the knowledge of reality, a difficult but deeply gratifying activity. The data of experience are elusive, challenging, sometimes baffling in their stubborn, exquisite individuality. To take in the precise pattern of a butterfly's wing or a sunset, the delicate shading of a beautiful woman's eyelids, the venation of a side of beef hanging in a butcher's stall, the mental gymnastics of a murderer, is to overcome an inertia that allows us generally to slip through the world without really experiencing it. In Boyd's happy phrase, this is Nabokov's "secret recipe for happiness: detach the mind from accepting a humdrum succession of moments, and everything becomes magical."

There is a curious and instructive correspondence between this view and the rationale for "defamiliarization" that was articulated at just the same time, in the 1920s, within the Soviet Union, by the Russian Formalists. Although there is no indication that Nabokov read the Formalists, Viktor Shklovsky's famous declaration on the escape from automatic perception through art could be a motto for Nabokov's writing: "Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*." One could construe both Nabokov and the Russian Formalists as parallel responses to a very modern sense of the decay of experience—a process of cultural devolution vividly described in this same period from another angle by Walter Benjamin.

But there are also significant differences. The Formalists emphasized experience as potent sensation. Nabokov saw sensation and pellucid knowledge as an indissoluble fusion. The Formalists envisaged discrete objects of experience that could be felt with renewed immediacy through constantly innovative artistic means. Nabokov assumed, as Boyd implies, that reality was a kind of infinite regress of related but unique entities—snowflakes and souls—endlessly and unpredictably linked with each other through hidden patterns, layer after layer or level after level of "reality" dimly glimmering behind the one we strive to see. That is why the finely discriminated details in his fiction are repeatedly set in a barely visible web of larger connective designs.

Finally, beneath all the ingenuity in Nabokov, there is the most poignant sense of a loss—dictated, surely, by his irrevocable exile in 1917 from the cherished world of his childhood—that the act of literary creation seeks to restore. Thus, the narrator of a story written in 1925, "A Guide to Berlin," proposes

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that the aim of literary art is "to portray ordinary objects as they will be reflected in the kindly mirrors of future times; to find in the objects around us the fragrant tenderness that only posterity will discern in the far-off times when every trifle of our plain, everyday life will become exquisite and festive in its own right."

This set of assumptions leads to a deployment of style and narrative point of view that repeatedly trips the reader off the beaten path of conventional response: through the surprise of an athletic metaphor, an odd choice of words, an unexpected angle of vision, the sheer microscopic precision of a visual perception, a bizarre conjunction of subject and tone. Consider a modest but characteristic illustration from one of the early Russian novels, *King, Queen, Knave* (1928). Martha Dreyer is sitting in a train compartment headed for Berlin with the callow young man named Franz whom she will make her lover, and with her husband, whose death she will eventually plot. Irritated by her husband's presence, she closes her eyes and leans back in her seat:

> The sun penetrated her eyelids with solid scarlet, across which luminous stripes moved in succession (the ghostly negative of the passing forest), and a replica of her husband's cheerful face as if slowly rotating toward her, got mixed up in this barred redness, and she opened her eyes with a start.

This is the sort of minute perceptual phenomenon that few novelists would take the trouble to discriminate, certainly with such precision. The mimetic success of the moment is chiefly a matter of careful observation, abetted by the happy metaphor of the photographic negative—sunlight turned scarlet under closed lids, interrupted by the vertical shapes of the passing trees, so that the intervals of light among them become red bars on the retina. (The focus on a liminal state between waking and sleep may have been encouraged by the model of Nabokov's great Russian predecessor Andrey Biely.) The rotating face of the husband among the bars might be an intimation that the presomnolent image is associated with Martha's sense of imprisonment in her sterile marriage, though Nabokov is always scrupulous about avoiding symbolic insistences. The entire moment of Martha's dozing off on the train, moreover, is an allusion, or a kind of *hommage*, to a much grander novel about adultery: an invocation of the brilliantly realized scene early in *Anna Karenina* in which Anna, reading an English novel in her train compartment on the way to Moscow, drifts off into a dream of a more exciting life.

The allusion to Tolstoy reflects Nabokov's constant awareness that all representations of reality in fiction take place against a large and complex background of established representational techniques and specific memorable instances of representation. The abiding challenge to the writer is to use them, refine them, go beyond them. As a lepidopterist, he was proud of having devised a new method of classification that involved counting the scales on butterfly wings, and his procedure as a novelist was often motivated by a similar impulse to catch what to the "communal eye" (a phrase he uses scornfully in *Pale Fire*) lay below the threshold of perception, like those luminous stripes beneath the dozing Martha's eyelids. What is below the threshold may be pure sensory experience—Nabokov's interest in such phenomena may explain his excessive admiration for the elegant, arid novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet—or it may involve something as complicated as the psychology of a deviant or an outsider: a pervert and an obsessive who is both a radiant artist and a perverter of art (Humbert Humbert), a myopic, hopelessly inept, absent-minded professor who is also a bumbling moral hero (Pnin).

These considerations may help us understand what is involved in the vehemence of Nabokov's rejection in his letter to Khodasevich of all the ways of talking and seeing that he associates with the "herd instinct." But was he more than an elitist turning his back on the great and terrible events of his time, the unreconstructed "aristocrat" imagined by his detractors? The degree to which those events impinged on him from the age of eighteen to forty-one must be stressed. Through Lenin's seizure of power, Nabokov lost his patrimony, literally and figuratively, and was banished forever from his native ground. In 1922, at an émigré political meeting in Berlin, his father, a widely admired leader of the liberal-centrist Constitutional Democrats, was murdered by a right-wing extremist.

From 1933 to 1937, he lived in Berlin under Hitler, a predicament he would have found hateful in any case but one that was particularly ominous because his wife was a Jew. (Three years later he left occupied France for America with the help of HIAS, a Jewish relief organization.) At this same time in the 1930s, Leninist state terror had swelled into Stalinist planned starvation and mass murder, counting among its victims people Nabokov had known; and his brother Sergei was arrested by the Nazis as a homosexual, and was destined to perish in a concentration camp.

Against this grim background, it should be noted (and Boyd, following a hint from the émigré critic Gleb Struve, does note) that Nabokov, especially in the 1930s, devotes a good deal of his writing to political topics, for all his aestheticism. In addition to *Invitation to a Beheading*, he dealt with the menace of totalitarianism in stories like "Cloud, Castle, Lake" and "Tyrants Destroyed," and in his play, *The Waltz Invention*. Moreover, as Boyd observes, the biography-within-a-novel of the nineteenth-century socialist thinker Nikolai Chernyshevsky in *The Gift* is essentially an assault on the foundations of Marxism, a scathing criticism of the outlook that made art a stupid instrument of "progressive" ideology. The first novel that Nabokov wrote after settling in America, *Bend Sinister* (1947), is, like *Invitation*, the projection into a fictional world of the principles of the totalitarian state. Even later, as he moved on to other concerns, nightmare images of political terror still flitted through his work: the Jewish woman Pnin once loved who dies a hideous death in a concentration camp, the murderous goon Gradus in *Pale Fire*, who is sent by the revolutionary regime of Zembla to assassinate its exiled king.

Still, the essential way in which Nabokov's fiction is a serious response to twentieth-century politics is not in these intermittent confrontations with explicitly political questions, but in an underlying assumption about the relation of consciousness to reality. He perceived early that the supreme imperative of totalitarianism was to impose a ruthless conformism on consciousness, to make human beings mechanically manipulable by reducing individual consciousness to a set of collective automatisms. The instruments of reduction were not only terror and demagoguery, but also propaganda masquerading as art. He was sensitive, too, to conformist pressures in the intellectual and consumerist fashions of the democratic states—the "all-together-now" impulse that drove people to world's fairs and best-selling formula-fiction, though these were diluted and merely irritating analogues to the obliteration of individual imagination that was an inner necessity of totalitarianism.

Art, for Nabokov, was neither a luxury nor an escape. It was the last line of freedom's defense, the most powerful and concrete demonstration that the mind was unfettered, that there was "always more" of reality than the official repressive versions made out. "We are visitors and investigators in a strange universe, indeed," observes the narrator of *Ada*. Nabokov's fiction is devised as a sus-

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tained campaign of resistance against all who try to displace the strangeness with a flat, coercively prescribed plan of reality.

Consider an example that is both a programmatic statement of this principle and an illustration of its enactment in novelistic technique. At the end of the fourth chapter of *Bend Sinister*, Adam Krug, the philosopher protagonist, aching over the recent death of his wife, Olga, and worried by the menace of the totalitarian Russo-Germanic regime under which he lives, makes his way past an embracing adolescent couple blocking the doorway to his apartment house. They separate, the girl dashes up the stairs ahead of Krug, trailing her gaudily spangled wrap "with all its constellations—Cepheus and Cassiopeia in their eternal bliss, and the dazzling tear of Capella, and Polaris the snowflake on the grizzly fur of the Cub, and the swooning galaxies."

This wild flight of association leads the philosopher Krug to reflect on Pascal's famous statement about being frightened by the starry spaces: "Those mirrors of infinite space *qui m'effrayent*, Blaise, as they did you, and where Olga is not, but where mythology stretches strong circus nets, lest thought, in its ill-fitting tights, should break its old neck instead of rebounding with a hep and a hop"—and on the metaphor goes, for another dozen lines, showing thought the acrobat pirouetting in the "urine-soaked dust" of a circus ring as it completes its breathtaking stunt.

Characteristically, the narrative procedure is not interior monologue, but the poised report of an artful narrator who selectively enters into the protagonist's point of view. The mental leap from the anonymous girl's spangled wrap to the swooning galaxies is certainly Krug's, but it is unclear whether the elaborate metaphor of thought as a tightrope walker over the abyss of infinity is supposed to occur to Krug or is, more probably, the narrator's own poetic observation on how the mind works. The key to the passage and to the novel, the very trait that confused and annoyed American reviewers when the book first appeared in 1947, is the sudden, extravagant efflorescence of the unanticipated. One hardly expects starry constellations and high-wire acts on the darkened landing of a European apartment building in a city gripped by state terror.

There is something irrepressibly celebratory about Nabokov's writing—I borrow that word from *The Art of Celebration*, a forthcoming book by Alfred Appel Jr.—that manifests itself even in his bleakest works, like *Bend Sinister*. He is continually grateful, as Boyd's biography stresses, for the bounties of experience and for the mind's ability to take them in. One may argue that not everything in *Bend Sinister* fits together as tightly as all the seemingly bizarre details in *Invitation to a Beheading*, but the underlying criticism of totalitarianism in the two novels is similar. In the crucial instance of the exceptional individual, the mind itself refuses to be caged. Its athleticism, enabling it to leap from realm to realm, to turn the world into a kaleidoscope of swarming possibilities, presents a stubborn, mocking challenge to the crude, monochromatic operation of mind without imagination, manacled by totalitarianism.

So it is appropriate that this novel should include a long meditation on Shakespeare, "a man who had only to breathe on any particle of his stupendous vocabulary to have that particle live and breathe and throw out tremulous tentacles until it became a complex image with a pulsing brain and correlated limbs." Nabokov's devotion to the exhilarating freedom of consciousness that allows it to scale heights, skirt abysses, peer into peculiar nooks and crannies is evident not only on every page of *Bend Sinister*, but throughout his writing. *The Defense*, *The Gift*, *Lolita*, *Pale Fire*, and *Speak, Memory* are as much acts of resistance against the oppressive force of modern ideologies as are his two explicitly political novels.

II.

The growing interest in Nabokov within the Soviet Union as communism crumbles throws a retrospective light on the political dimension of this writer who for the most part eschewed politics while adhering to his father's staunch liberal outlook. As recently as three years ago, Nabokov was still a forbidden writer in the Soviet Union, read only clandestinely. His identity as an émigré, an aristocrat, and a frank anti-Communist sufficed to make him taboo in the 1920s and 1930s. Later, after his switch from Russian to English, the conspicuous international success of *Lolita* also confirmed him in the prudish eyes of the Soviet regime as a scandalously indecent writer.

But in the late spring of 1990, the journal *Inostrannia Literatura* (Foreign Literature)—an organization with official standing, though evidently one that keeps a healthy distance from the Party-linked Writers' Union—sponsored a three-day conference on Nabokov, open to the public and covered by the press. I was among the roughly twenty-five participants, who were about equally divided between Russians and people from abroad. More than half of the foreigners

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were American, mostly from departments of Slavic studies, though there was also one Pole, one New Zealander (Boyd), one Canadian, one East Indian, and one West German.

The Russians who gave papers were men (no women) in their thirties or forties; the recovery of Nabokov in the Soviet Union seems to be an activity of relatively young people. They were too smart and too cultivated to undertake the task in a nationalistic spirit. In fact, the convener of the conference, Nikolai Anastasiev, deputy editor of *Inostrannia Literatura*, stressed in his introductory remarks that Nabokov was one of the great modern cosmopolitan writers and should not be appropriated as uniquely Russian. Still, quite understandably, there was some feeling on the Russian side of reclaiming a major writer who wrote for two decades in Russian, who remained steeped in Russian literary traditions, who had been withheld from readers and scholars in the Soviet Union for all these years.

The desire to recover a lost Russian writer, and even, in a certain sense, the Russia that was lost with him, was poignantly apparent in Leningrad. After the formal sessions in Moscow, our hosts, whose institutional and individual hospitality was unflagging, took us by first-class night train to Leningrad, the city, under another name, of Nabokov's childhood. People are actually beginning to call it Petersburg again, and we saw that some Communist-name street signs had been torn down. We had not quite realized that we were to be led on a kind of Nabokov pilgrimage. Indeed, although most of our Russian counterparts appeared to view him with an appropriately ironic intelligence, there were also some signs of a Nabokov cult in the making.

The young man who acted as our guide seemed to have committed to memory every step of the route on which Nabokov and his brother were taken for walks by their nanny at the dawn of the century. Peering up from the courtyard behind what was once the Nabokov town house at 47 Morskaya Street, he pointed out the high window of the room where little Volodya would go to pee. The ground floor of the house is now an institutional library. After some complicated negotiation with the dour babushka who barred the entrance, our group was allowed to enter and glimpse the still grand staircase with its splendid stained glass windows on the first landing, and what was once the gracious wood-paneled dining room.

We were also taken to the site of the Nabokov estate at Vyra, about fifty kilometers outside the city. The house so vividly evoked in *Speak, Memory* was burned to the ground by the Nazis before they fled, but the wooded landscape and the vistas of the Oredezh River are still ravishing. One easily understands how the eighteen-year-old Nabokov was able to carry with him into exile not a resentment over lost goods, but a passion for the luminous beauty of nature that he constantly remembered in his writing and variously rediscovered in regions to the west.

At the turn of the century, Petersburg must have been one of the most spectacular cities in Europe. It is still quite beautiful—until you come close to the buildings and realize how deteriorated they are, flaking, cracking, begrimed, marked with the stigmata of seven decades of neglect, like almost everything in the Soviet Union. Nabokov, although he is many other things, as the sundry conference papers stressed, is inevitably associated with that moment just before the cultural splendor was abruptly eclipsed. The point is not merely that he grew up in a glittering aristocratic world, lived in that grand house on Morskaya Street, was transported to his liberal high school (somewhat to his embarrassment) in a limousine, but that the polished artifice of his writing is a monument more lasting than bronze to a vanished Russian culture. It expresses not only the refinement of Russian aesthetic traditions, but also a humane liberalism that stood in opposition to the absolutism of the czars.

In Russia, it seems, things now change faster than you can imagine, and nobody has a clue as to how it will all turn out. The fortunes of Nabokov are striking proof of the first of these two principles. On our way to Russia, my wife and I met an Italian professor of philosophy at Bagni di Lucca who said he traveled frequently to the Soviet Union. When we explained the purpose of our visit, he observed that, yes, it's quite remarkable that the Russians should be sponsoring a conference on Nabokov, but there would be one text about which we would hear nothing, and that was *Lolita*. At the Moscow airport we were met by a woman who is on the staff of *Inostrannia Literatura*, and, to our surprise, we were taken to stay at her apartment. (It emerged that the journal did not have sufficient political clout to get first-class hotel rooms in Moscow, so we were all lodged graciously by members of the editorial staff or by writers.) In her living room, crowded with bookshelves, a grand piano, a double bed, a large desk, and a dining table, we discovered a newly published copy of *Lolita* in Nabokov's own Russian translation. One may assume that, like his other books, it has been produced in a large printing—perhaps 100,000 copies—that will be entirely snapped up soon after publication.

We grasped what a shocking transformation this represented at the end of the last Moscow session. A woman journalist had requested permission to address the group on a matter that she thought might be of interest. Speaking in emphatic, rapid-fire Russian (an American colleague improvised a translation), she explained that she had just covered a court case involving the retrial of a man sentenced only three years ago to seven years in prison on a pornography charge: he had distributed copies of *Lolita*. The court did not exonerate him, but his sentence was commuted to three-and-a-half years, so that he would be eligible for imminent release. Nobody explained the contradiction of sustaining the classification of pornography for a book that had just been legally published.

And then the recent suppression of literature through the penal system was brought still closer to home. Among the Russian participants at the conference was a Leningrader named Mikhail Meylakh, a man in his forties who started out as a scholar of Provençal poetry, and who now makes his living at least in part as the correspondent for a Paris-based émigré journal, a vocation that would have been inconceivable just a few years ago. What had interrupted his professional career, I discovered, was his arrest in 1983 for possessing a copy of *Speak, Memory*. He was sentenced to four years in a labor camp for this crime against the state. He was not in the least inclined to be melodramatic about his experience: he did what he felt he had to do, he was fully prepared to suffer the consequences. When I asked him how he had managed without a regular job, he explained, quite simply, that in his society money is not very important. There's not much you can buy, and what there is doesn't cost very much; if you have a place to live and a few friends, you get along.

I was moved by both these stories and referred to them at a public forum in Leningrad, at the Palace of Labor, once a palace of Alexander III, at which we were all invited to make brief personal statements about Nabokov. I recounted that the first thing I had written on Nabokov, over twenty years ago, was an essay on *Invitation to a Beheading*, in which I tried to explain how a writer could permit himself the seeming luxury of an exploration of art and artifice in a novel dealing with totalitarianism. My answer in 1969 had been that totalitarianism, by its logic,

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needs to destroy real art and replace it with fake art, with *poshlost*, because art is a free exercise of individual consciousness that cannot be tolerated. But it was only now, I said, confronted by these two stories, that I realized the full human implication of the idea I had sought to express then. At a party the next night I learned that one of the panel coordinators had been on the phone for three hours in the middle of the night with an anonymous caller who was indignant about the political provocation delivered by the American professor.

Talking about Nabokov in Russia makes one acutely aware of the never-never land that American academia has become. Literature in our own academic circles is regularly dismissed, castigated as an instrument of ideologies of oppression, turned into a deconstructive plaything, preferentially segregated by the pigmentation and the sexual orientation of the writers, or entirely displaced by clinical case studies, metaphysical treatises, psychoanalytic theories, and artifacts of popular culture. Those of us who made the journey to Moscow came away with the sense that there are still people in the world for whom literature matters urgently, for whom literature has a strong and illuminating connection with the real world. When dark times require it, there are even people prepared to risk their freedom for the truth of a writer's vision.

It is surely instructive that Nabokov should speak so tellingly to younger Russians in the process of extricating themselves from seven decades of systematic oppression. To the casual eye, or perhaps one should say, to the communal eye, he is a mannered, self-indulgently aesthetic writer, playing virtuoso tunes on the fiddle of private experience as the world burns. In truth, however, he is a novelist obsessed with love and loss, concerned with how a misdirected aesthetic impulse twists lives and inflicts pain, with how the public realm can violate the territory of individual existence, including the sanctum of the mind.

Brian Boyd summarizes Nabokov's character in three salient traits: his unflagging self-assurance, "his intense, almost ruthlessly concentrated feelings toward others," and "his unrelenting individualism." The second of these three traits helps to explain the passionate feeling beneath the surface glitter of his prose. He needed the self-assurance and the individualism to keep him going through decades when his writing went stubbornly against the grain of literary fashion and could scarcely sustain his material existence. He never wavered

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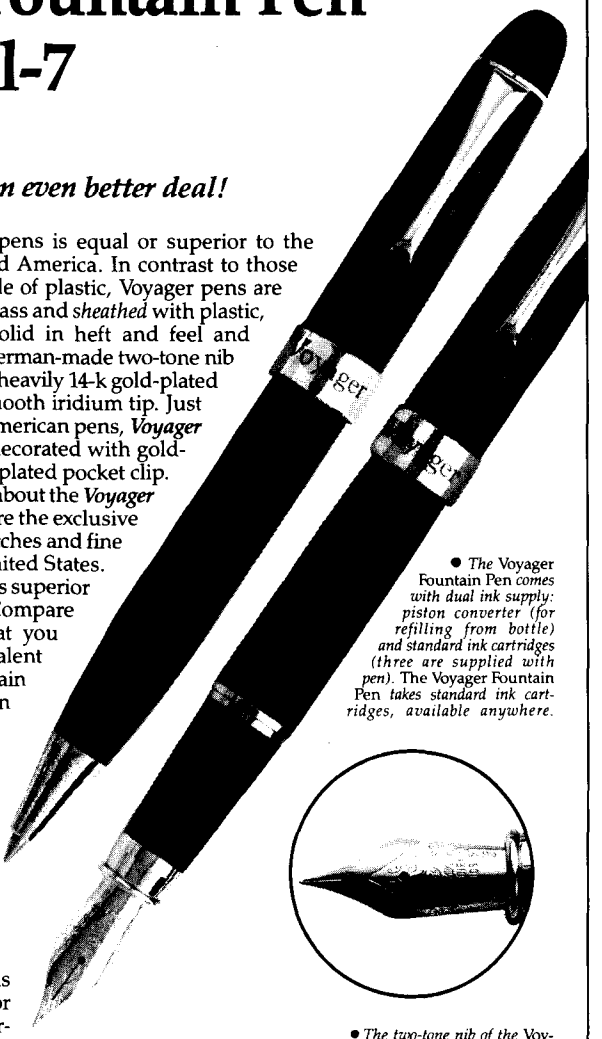

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from writing the kind of books he knew he had to write, not in the face of political cataclysms during the European years, not in the face of misguided advice from American publishers and critics before his great success with *Lolita*. Shortly after finishing that novel in 1954, he described it, in a letter to James Laughlin, as a "timebomb." The same may be said thirty-six years later of many of his books. He repeatedly demonstrated that fidelity to the imagination is a form of political courage, a recognition now shared by readers in his native land who are exercising the same rare virtue.

ROBERT ALTER is Class of 1937 Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. His most recent book is *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* (Simon and Schuster).

The Great Seduction

BY IRVING HOWE

The Cause That Failed: Communism in American Political Life by Guenter Lewy

(Oxford University Press, 352 pp., $24.95)

A strange book! The first half, a rehash of standard histories of American communism, is quite without value. Little can be found here that is not available in Theodore Draper's authoritative volumes or in the specialized studies by Joseph Starobin and Harvey Klehr. I'm really at a loss to explain why a reputable scholar like Guenter Lewy should have written the first part of his book, for he seems bored by the whole business—a feeling quite understandable in anyone but the author of a book on this subject.

The second half, by contrast, deals with Communist infiltration into protest movements over the past several decades and has pertinent material. Raising important problems about how to deal with undemocratic movements in a democratic society, Lewy writes as a moderate conservative prepared to entertain other opinions, so that it's possible to argue with him seriously. Since there's no point in rehearsing here the tragicomic story of American communism, I will just say a few words about the problem of infiltration, and then about a matter that Lewy discusses at too great an emotional distance: What made idealistic men and women of the 1930s and 1940s turn to communism?

Throughout the postwar years American protest movements were plagued, sometimes ripped apart, by disputes as to whether Communists should be barred from their leadership, even membership. The problem tormented liberals, and even now, when it is seldom a practical difficulty, it raises questions concerning democratic theory. By and large Lewy approves of the policy of excluding Communists from protest movements, while I take the other side. So let me try, with as much fairness as I can muster, to assemble the arguments.

In principle there is no reason why a voluntary organization should not feel free to set its own limits of adherence. Let us imagine a socialist organization. It seems proper for it to announce that people who prefer capitalism or communism cannot join its ranks, but should instead adhere to movements advancing their views. Yet things become sticky when, say, a left-wing sect tries to penetrate the British Labour Party, for while the sect, by a very generous reading, might be seen as politically compatible with the party, it usually makes its "entry" with the intent to raid and destroy. In such circumstances, the party's right to survival seems a valid consideration.

Things get more complicated in organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union and SANE, since these organizations have no explicit political ideology and welcome people of various opinions who endorse their limited purposes. During the 1960s there were bitter disputes within the ACLU and SANE regarding this matter. The ACLU removed a known Communist, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, from its board on the ground that she was committed to the Soviet Union, a nation that allowed no civil liberties. SANE took more modulated positions in the hope of resisting infiltration without resorting to exclusion.

Still more troublesome was the case of the CIO, which in 1949 expelled several unions controlled by Communists. The charge against them was that they manipulated the unions that they controlled on behalf of Soviet policies. This was true; but some left-wing anti-Stalinist unionists still opposed the expulsion. For one thing, the CIO leadership had previously been quite comfortable, at times cozy, with the Communist unionists, and only when the cold war grew intense did it propose expulsion. For another, driving out Communist-led unions might well weaken them as unions, and thereby endanger the living standards of their members. When ideology and livelihood clash in union affairs, it's often livelihood that suffers.

As for Students for a Democratic Society, the radical group that flourished on campus during the 1960s, it began by rejecting the leftist anti-communism of the adult socialist organization with which it was at first affiliated. The SDS believed that anti-communism was a cover for reaction and that to exclude anyone from its ranks was to violate its spirit of fraternity. In the late 1960s, when student outrage against the Vietnam War made SDS into a mass organization, it had also become a political battleground for a bewildering range of far-left groups: Maoists, Trotskyists, the Weathermen, and many free-lancers. To have attempted a policy of exclusion such as Lewy advocates would have been out of the question, since it would have meant to exclude all the organized factions within SDS—and it's not clear who would or could have done the excluding.

The admirable purposes of groups like the ACLU and SANE, said those liberals favoring exclusion, would be badly compromised in the eyes of most Americans if they saw that Communists were tolerated as leaders. Such tolerance would be quickly exploited by demagogues like Senator Joe McCarthy. Actually, replied other liberals, it was expulsion that played into the hands of those who were creating a repressive atmosphere. For while this may not have been the intent of those who proposed expulsion, it was the likely consequence.

Reading in Lewy's book that Norman Cousins, the writer who was a leading figure in SANE, had "contacted the FBI" in 1958 "and requested that the Bureau furnish SANE with the names of individuals known to them as attempting to infiltrate," I was taken aback. The FBI is not my idea of an appropriate partner in a political debate. I wrote to Cousins, who flatly denied, in a telephone conversation, that he ever contacted the FBI about the internal life of SANE. Where this leaves Lewy as historian I cannot say.

The Communists, argued those favoring expulsions, functioned as a secret, disciplined "fraction," with many of their people masquerading as liberals,

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and were thereby, even though a minority, able to take over segments of organizations like SANE and the ACLU. Ordinary democratic procedures appropriate for ordinary democratic disputes simply did not work in dealing with agents or allies of the Communist Party. (Amusingly, Lewy notes that during the 1960s the Communists complained that in a leftist anti-war group the same tactics were being used against them by the Trotskyists.)

In practice it was quite impossible to find democratic ways of excluding secret Communists, and as for the few declared ones, it didn't much matter. When I was on the SANE board for a few years during the 1960s, I thought I could detect the secret Communists through their style and rhetoric, but of course I had no reliable way of checking these impressions.

In any case, the significant battles within such organizations did not emerge as a blunt opposition between Communists and anti-Communist liberals. The lineup was more complicated. On one side within SANE were "the moderates," who were opposed to the Vietnam War but for tactical reasons were unwilling to call for unconditional withdrawal from Vietnam and also were refusing to work with those who openly favored a Communist victory. The other side, led by Dr. Benjamin Spock, proposed unconditional American withdrawal, and some of its supporters were ready to cooperate with partisans of Ho Chi Minh in order to end American participation in the war. Dr. Spock got on my nerves, as no doubt I got on his, but neither he nor many of his allies were Communists. A good number of them were absolute libertarians, spiritual grandchildren of Thoreau, convinced they were defending individual freedoms.

Democratic values entail a belief that each person should be judged in his or her own right. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, when some Communists were being dismissed from university faculties, Sidney Hook argued that CP membership could be taken as evidence that a professor would use the classroom for Party propaganda, since—and he cited numerous Party directives—that was what a Communist professor was instructed to do. I argued that even though the CP did issue such directives, this did not mean that Communist teachers necessarily obeyed them. Some might retain sentiments of academic integrity, and indeed, during my student years at City College in the late 1930s, I had taken classes with Communist teachers who tried neither to impose the Party line nor to prevent free discussion. In rebuttal, those who sided with Hook said in effect what the Yiddish proverb says: "For example is no proof." Granted; but even if the instances I cited were few in number, they added up to a sufficient reason for judging each teacher individually, on the basis of classroom behavior, and not as part of an accused collective.

These disputes left many good people sore and weary, prompting them to withdraw from public life. Each of the conflicting positions exacted a cost; no one got off scot-free. To some younger people, no doubt, all this may seem remote, but it would be foolhardy not to learn from the struggles of the postwar years. Learn what? At the least, the sheer difficulty of an effective democratic politics when there is sharp disagreement as to what constitutes democratic methods.

How could intelligent people during the 1930s and 1940s have been so deluded about communism? Didn't they *see*?

What they saw was that the "whole rotten structure" of capitalist society (that's how people talked then) was collapsing. Mass unemployment, factories shut down, mine owners pleading that their industry be nationalized, men sleeping in shacks on Riverside Drive—these were just a few signs of a deep crisis of civilization. Growing up in the 1930s, sharing the deprivations of my family, reading about the spread of barbarism in Europe, I felt keenly as a boy what I began to hear adults say explicitly: that we had reached a point where the tacit assumption that some meaning or value inheres in communal life was crumbling.

Did most Americans feel this? Probably not. In words they would have reaffirmed their faith in American destiny, but beneath the words simmered a severe anxiety. The major literary figures of the West shared in this mood, testifying that we were witnessing a time of social breakdown. Such testimony came from writers of the right at least as much as from writers of the left, perhaps even more so, since those on the right could not solace themselves with visions of a better world in birth.

Feelings that the fabric of social life had been torn apart were shared by millions of people who never defined themselves as radicals. Such feelings were shared by liberals who read THE NEW REPUBLIC. They were shared by many of those who voted for Franklin Roosevelt if only because they saw no realistic alternative. But no play of memory, I suspect, can begin to convey the desperation of those days. So let me attempt an attack on your nerves.

You, dear reader who pride yourself on being a moderate liberal, would in

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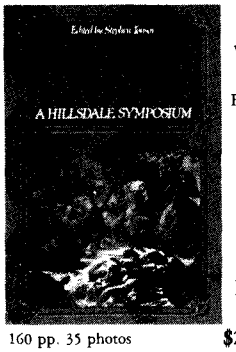

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1935 have shared the conviction that capitalism was done for. You would have opted for the politics of the Popular Front and regarded the Communists as necessary, if irksome, allies in the fight against fascism. And if you possessed a streak of boldness and a fondness for simplicities, you might even have joined the Communist Party.

Hard to imagine? Exactly.

Liberalism as a politics thrived during the 1930s, with Franklin Roosevelt shrewdly maneuvering from one improvisation to another. But as idea or sentiment, liberalism was on the defensive, often preoccupied with beating back attacks from the left. If most American intellectuals still identified themselves as liberals, what they meant by that term was sharply different from the usage of today. Liberals hoped, a shade wistfully, that a renovated society based on a socialistic economy might preserve democratic institutions, though they weren't always sure this was possible. Meanwhile an inflamed minority scoffed at such timorousness. "Becoming a Socialist right now," said John Dos Passos in the early 1930s, "would have just the same effect as drinking a bottle of near-beer." Dos Passos wanted to drain the real stuff, the beer that would make his head spin, and its brand name, he knew, was communism.

Within the intellectual world the Communists formed a minority, but they enjoyed an influence far beyond what their size might warrant. That influence derived from the fact that they had seized the initiative, always a critical advantage in political and intellectual life. They often set the agenda for debate. They sent a disproportionate number of low-paid and unpaid organizers to work in the newly formed CIO. They persuaded selfless young people that it was good to fight, perhaps to die, in Spain. Never within striking distance of American power, they commanded, by the late 1930s and mid-1940s, substantial strength in the labor movement and among intellectuals.

Reliable estimates have it that nearly a million Americans passed through the Party, some for a few months and some for a lifetime. A few million others came under its influence. Partisans of totality, agents of manipulated transcendence, they could command the political initiative—not, of course, in the country as a whole, but in significant segments—just as during the 1960s it would be held by the New Left, also a minority, and during the 1980s by the neoconservatives, still another minority. Had anyone in the 1930s or 1940s said what Lionel Trilling would say quite plausibly in the 1950s, that "in the United States at this time liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition," people would have collapsed in laughter.

These, roughly, were among the main conditions enabling intelligent people to become Communists. There were also more immediate causes and inducements that made life in or near the Party seem desirable. Marxism exerted a peculiar fascination, as if to fold into unity the rigor of science and the emotions of religion; and it was a mark of what Auden would call a "low, dishonest decade" (not so different from several of those to follow) that it was the vulgar reduction of Marxism advanced by the Stalinists that exerted a strong appeal. To possess a rudimentary grasp of Marxism—you had read *The Communist Manifesto*, you had skimmed *Value, Price and Profit*—endowed you with a conceptual power that even skeptical liberals might envy. You experienced the grand thrill of analysis, the thrill that, in evil days, enabled you to penetrate the "laws of motion" operating beneath the surface of fetishism. You held in your hand the dynamic of history, and as you scornfully glanced over the headlines of *The New York Times*, you understood what was really happening. (Has anyone charted the brilliant career of that word "really," coming down to us from the nineteenth-century unmaskers, Marx and Nietzsche, later Freud?)

Nor was all this true only about intellectuals. The Jewish garment workers reading the *Freiheit* on West 38th Street, the movie scriptwriters meeting secretly with the "Party rep" in a Hollywood drawing room, the Detroit union leader staffing his local with young Communists: all felt exalted under the spell of an idea.

Not just the idea as idea, but the idea as it took on the comforts of authority. It was through its certification in the Party that the idea acquired authority. Mundane assignments could now take on dignity, and the spirits of followers could be lifted above the darkness of each day. For the Party possessed something that no one else could claim: the Party possessed historical perspective. How precious was that word "historical" at a moment when history itself had lost its way. To abandon the Party was worse than to leave the Church, since those who left the Church could still make a private compact with God, while those who left the Party or, worst of all, were expelled could only sink into nullity.

As for the handful of anti-Stalinist Marxists, they, too, might enjoy the thrill of analysis, but only in a qualified way. They had to struggle along in lonely, irritable sects. They had the great heresiarch in Mexico City, but he had no apparatus, only brilliance and pride. Sooner or later, anti-Stalinist Marxists stumbled on the shoals of heresy, and from this followed the crackup of ideology.

For those secure in the Party, however, there loomed the distant state where thousands of workers were building great dams. (The enemy said slave laborers were building the dams, but that was a lie, and if it wasn't a lie, it didn't finally matter, since the history that exacted blood could also exact a quota of sanctified lies.) And above the state loomed the leader, that giant of steel. (The enemy said he was a tyrant, and among a few of the more sophisticated Party intellec-

Alban Berg

After the great war, his opera singers wandered
into the dissonance of forest ponds.
He loved the way the violins huddled
into clusters, how his heroine
dangled from the black thread of her voice.

But in the blackest times, he thought, the music
we hear turns white again: the way the city
whitens in winter, the way a child's voice
is white as he rocks his horse, unaware
of diminished fifths descending the forest path.

It was Carnival, 1933:
the Aryan winter blew through the ears
of concert halls in hoarse, white drifts.
A man swept his steps in the snow, turned back
to see them filling up again.

As Berg's taxi swerved through the heart
of Munich, it sputtered over the ice and stalled.
Across the street, boys cursed a tailor shop.
A window broke; a glittering anthem
stumbled out of the bright cafe, a shredded

parade where joy rained in bits of paper
and loud men toppled to the snow, laughing.
The blizzard thickened over his windshield,
and he drew his cape shut like a curtain
between the world and a world more dark, more sweet.

Bruce Bond

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tuals there may have been a blurred half-knowledge that this was so, but finally it didn't matter since history claimed its victims and beyond common truth there was a greater truth composed of falsehoods serving as symbolic tokens of truth.)

In the 1930s and 1940s, Marxism exerted its appeal also through a theory of politics that, to be honest, was not confined to the Stalinists. Marxism lacked or refused perceptions of politics as an autonomous sphere. It had little or nothing to say about legislatures, divisions of governmental power, bureaucratic structures, the entire complex of democratic politics. It insisted that politics was ultimately the superstructural reflection of the socioeconomic base, and while there was of course a measure of truth in this, as the Reaganites would later demonstrate, there was also a distinct vulgarity. Nor did it matter that a careful reading of Marx, beyond the several pamphlets that the Party hawked, would elicit more complex theories of politics. What came to dominate the Communist milieu was the disastrous notion that "bourgeois democracy" was a mere sham—or as some New Leftists, mimicking what they did not know, would say: mere "formal democracy."

All efforts to grasp how intelligent people could become Communists must touch upon the matter of idealism. Almost every Communist I knew, even the most brutal, had begun with a fund of idealism, and in some perverse way many, perhaps most, Communists clung to it. In the countries where the Communists seized power, they did of course attract many opportunists, cynics on the make, not very different from the sort one finds in our own politics. But where the Party had no power, those who became Communists wanted, at first, a better world—and then the better world became another world.

Still, idealism there was, twisted upon itself, debased into conformity and fanaticism. Party members who helped organize the CIO acted out of a kind of idealism, even as they turned their unions into agencies serving the Party's ends. Party members who went to fight in Spain acted out of a kind of idealism, even as some of them committed atrocities against dissident leftists. The "doubleness" of Stalinism tends to be dismissed these days, and that is one reason that decent conservatives like Guenter Lewy lack the historical imagination to transport themselves into another time.

If humanity cannot live without a measure of idealism, idealism can turn upon humanity. Prompted by impatience with the laggard pace of history, idealism generated a counterforce from within itself, an involuntary poisonous secretion. Dostoyevsky understood this brilliantly when he wrote in *A Raw Youth* about man's "faculty of cherishing in his soul the loftiest ideal side by side with his greatest baseness, and all quite sincerely." The last four are the words that count.

It was in the relationship between the political conduct of the Communist movement and its justifying idea that the perils, or misuses, of idealism came through most sharply. How this could happen was keenly described in 1938 by John Dewey, in the course of a polemic against Trotsky on the subject of means and ends. Dewey began by agreeing with the Marxists that the usual outcry that "the end does not justify the means" can quickly drop into cant, since if the means require justification and if, indeed, there is any possibility of justifying them, then it is only by reference to the declared end. But then Dewey proceeded to a valuable distinction between ends and what he called "ends-in-view," with the former signifying proximate objectives and the latter ultimate goals (peace on earth, realized socialism, etc.). By invoking an "end-in-view" (socialism, etc.), the Communist movement could rationalize means that led to inhumane ends. Or as Dewey put it:

> Now what has given the maxim (and the practice it formulates) that the end justifies the means a bad name is that the end-in-view, the end professed and entertained (perhaps quite sincerely) justifies the use of certain means, and so justifies the latter that it is not necessary to examine what the actual consequences of the use of chosen means will be.

Dewey is not an elegant writer, but if you stay with his sentence you will see that he is making a keen criticism not only of Communist but of much political practice. Thus, President Bush has justified the American intervention in the Middle East by saying that "our way of life" is at stake, and while the American policy may be right (or wrong), it can hardly be justified seriously by invoking such a distant end-in-view as our "way of life." More immediate ends (oil, collective security, whatever) have to be envisaged and justified. This problem ranges through all political movements, but most urgently through those that are heavily ideological. The Gulag could be justified by Stalinism by invoking a supposed future of socialism, although the Gulag stemmed from and led to a quite different order of politics and society—just as the Inquisitors could justify torture by claiming, "perhaps quite sincerely," that they were doing the work of God.

A historical epoch is almost over, and communism, except in a few marginal countries, no longer exerts much force. A dream long corrupted has now been shattered. Partly in consequence, we will be living through a time of reduced expectations, modest sentiments. In the short run that may not be such a bad thing, but with time serious people will again be stirred by thoughts of new historical possibilities. Man cannot live by commodities alone.

IRVING HOWE's *Selected Writings: 1950-1990* is due this fall from Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Us v. Them

BY RICHARD A. POSNER

Making All the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law by Martha Minow

(Cornell University Press, 400 pp., $29.95)

When one reads in an author's acknowledgments of grandmother's gift for knitting and "Thanks, Nell, for reminding me as only an older sister could of the first poem I ever learned," and that "Anne Rayman and Bob Singer, along with Adam and Rachel, have made every get-together a holiday," and that "Vicky Spelman gave me a thread, a pulley, a rubber ball, and a pipe that each became important parts of this work," and then encounters "Sesame Street" in the first sentence on page one and later reads that "horses 'have always understood a great deal more than they let on,' " one is primed to expect a softer and a nicer book than is typical of law professors.

That is what one gets. *Making All the Difference* by Martha Minow of Harvard Law School is a well-intentioned, wide-

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ranging, imaginative, courteous, resolutely inclusive, resolutely non-dogmatic book about legal theory and practice in relation to traditionally disadvantaged persons, primarily the physically and mentally handicapped but also women. (There are surprisingly few references to race.) But these considerable virtues are purchased at a price: diffuseness, repetitiousness, a failure to press points home, at times a naïveté shading into an evasion of reality, at times even a denial of the central premise of the book.

That premise is a distrust of categorization, especially categorization that makes a sharp distinction between "us," the "normal," the benchmark—in fact, often just the average, the majority, or the politically, socially, or economically dominant—and some class of others, the subnormal or abnormal or marginal, as they appear to us to be. White and non-white, man and woman, able-bodied and disabled, normal and retarded, whole and crippled, healthy and sick, sane and insane, majority and minority, normal and deviant, even adult and child: these are examples of dichotomies that, however useful in ordering the chaos of our perceptions, by framing perceptions limit them, and by limiting them help to rationalize insensitive, even oppressive, treatment of people who are different from the average member of society and who do not have much, and sometimes have no, political or other power.

The dichotomies I have mentioned have this effect in part because they appear to be natural, intrinsic, inevitable, rather than, as in fact they are, socially constructed, for the sake of expedience or policy or even exploitation. Of course, there are real—"natural" (in fact biological)—as well as merely social differences between whites and blacks, men and women, adults and children, the healthy and the sick, the bright and the retarded. But the ascription of legal rights and duties on the basis of these differences is a social act rather than a command of nature, and is therefore contestable, revisable. Not easily, though. What is familiar seems natural and what is natural seems immutable, so we must keep up our guard against complacency. We can do this only by becoming self-critical, by multiplying our skepticisms, our perspectives, our empathies.

All this is true, and important, and still resisted so strenuously as to be worth reiteration. Its neglect continues to cause needless cruelties and injustices. Moreover, it is a lesson particularly worth emphasizing to lawyers—the principal audience for Minow's book—because legal reasoning is a bastion of dichotomous classifications that oversimplify social reality and confuse local, transient, sometimes uninformed public opinion with durable, even metaphysical, reality.

But the approach that I have sketched and that is fundamental to Minow's book is cautionary rather than constructive. This is so whether it is set out in the garb of the American pragmatist philosophers such as John Dewey or that of the contemporary feminists who do not think it is enough for the law to treat women as if they were men and therefore to refuse, as the Supreme Court once did, to consider pregnancy a disability for which an employer who has a medical benefits plan for his employees should have to pay. Both garbs are on display in this book.

There is an important distinction to be made here. A pragmatist, in popular understanding, is a doer, a problem solver. But a pragmatist philosopher, historically, is a debunker of metaphysical and other occult entities (such as objective or ultimate "truth"), of philosophical foundations such as the real or the ideal, and of essentialist concepts such as the natural. In other words, he is a tearer down rather than a builder up. Feminist theoreticians, taking their cue in part from these philosophers, are debunkers of traditional ideas, often felt as natural and immutable by those who hold them, about the proper role of women. The great challenge is to put something in place of the jejune dichotomies that Minow, wielding the weapons of pragmatist and feminist thought, so effectively undermines.

To this challenge, however, the book does not rise. It is a "on the one hand, on the other hand" book. On the one hand, forcing an immigrant child to speak English from day one in public school exemplifies an uncritical norm of English-language competence. On the other hand, bilingual education may handicap the immigrant child in developing what is after all *the* essential language competence in an English-speaking nation. On the one hand, segregating deaf children in special classes classifies them and, by classifying, stigmatizes them as abnormal. On the other hand, ignoring their "differentness" by putting them in the same classes with non-deaf children makes it harder, maybe impossible, for the deaf children to learn. On the one hand, affirmative action for minorities stigmatizes them as handicapped. On the other hand, a "colorblind" public policy may keep them behind the societal eight ball. So while the differences in the way society treats the foreign-born and the native-born, the deaf and the non-deaf, the non-white and the white are not inscribed in the book of nature, efforts to eliminate them may make the disadvantaged group worse off rather than better off, or impose other unacceptable costs.

What is to be done? Minow is reluctant to say. For the most part she confines herself to stating dilemmas, posing questions, and exhorting her readers to set aside their prejudices, to transcend sterile dichotomies, to reason together. Her hesitation about taking sides on tough social questions is understandable, and if it gives the book an indecisive air, this is better than choosing recklessly on inadequate facts. Minow's lawyerly caution (I am tempted to say "innate" lawyerly caution) is reinforced by her awareness of the checkered history of social reform. The chapter on such failures of the Progressive movement as the creation of juvenile courts and the enactment of legislative protections for women workers is among the best in the book. The juvenile-court movement was intended to spare children the cruelty and stigma of adult punishment and place their fates in the hands of experts; in fact it merely denied them their procedural rights. The fixing of minimum wages and maximum hours for women, and their exclusion from dangerous occupations, may have been intended to protect women's health and welfare, and no doubt did so to some extent. But it also reduced their job opportunities and promoted the view that a woman's proper place is either in the home or in traditional women's jobs such as teaching and nursing.

Minow occasionally makes concrete proposals, but the results of these forays into the practical are not reassuring. With regard to the deaf child, for example, she suggests in all seriousness that the child be placed in a class with non-deaf children and the class conducted in sign language. The proposal fits her conceptual framework nicely because it reverses our "natural" tendency to take the non-deaf as the norm; the deaf becomes the norm. But the proposal, at least in the unelaborated form in which the book presents it, is unpersuasive, a gimmick. Before the class could be conducted in sign language, the children would have to be taught sign language—taught to understand and to "speak" it. A protracted course of instruction would be required, which would take time away from subjects of greater utility to the children (although a knowledge of sign language might be useful for diplomats in bugged embassies!) and would arouse the understandable resentment of parents at what many of them would consid-

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er irresponsible experimentation with their children's education. Minow does not tell the reader whether, once the children had mastered sign language, all classes in which the deaf child was enrolled would be conducted in that language, or some, or only one, and for how long the program would continue. And is there to be similar instruction in braille, in the operation of a wheelchair, and in the dialect of inner-city blacks?

A pragmatist is committed to considering the consequences of ideas. One consequence is cost. Minow does not examine the costs (or the benefits) of treating the exceptional as the normal for purposes of education policy. Nor the costs of treating pregnancy and active parenting as the normal condition of a worker to which the organization of the workplace should adapt with generous maternity and paternity leaves, flexible hours, and "free" day care. These adaptations are expensive, and it is particularly important for a pragmatist who, like Minow, is also an egalitarian to consider (as she does not) who will pay for them. Primarily it is workers. Their wages will fall because the cost of labor will rise if employers have to pay for maternity leave and paternity leave and day care and flex time. Consumers—to whom the employers will pass on a portion of their higher costs in the form of higher prices—will suffer too, and the poor more than the rich. An increase in price is like an increase in sales tax, which is a regressive tax (unless confined to luxury goods). A reduction in wages is similar in its distributive consequences, and will be felt most keenly by the wives of male workers and by childless women, married and unmarried. The perspectives of the childless, of the housewife, of the taxpayer, of the consumer are barely reflected in the book; Minow's empathies are truncated.

Minow is articulate about the dilemma presented by the baby who is born with a profound physical or mental defect. The "right to life" enthusiasts want to save the baby at all costs, regardless of the quality of the life that the child, if it survives, can be expected to lead. The "quality of life" enthusiasts want to let the baby die if it is unlikely to be able to lead a normal human life. Minow sides with the right-to-lifers, relegating to a footnote the resulting tension with the right of abortion, which she also supports. But her real hope is that the dilemma posed by the defective baby can be transcended and everyone made happy.

In this vein she offers the (real) case of a child born with Down's syndrome, a child who in the old days would have been called, cruelly and inaccurately, a "Mongoloid Idiot." One component of Down's syndrome is a serious heart defect nowadays reparable by surgery. In the case that Minow discusses, the child's parents withheld their consent to the surgery. They thought their child would be better off dead. A couple who did volunteer work at the institution in which the child was living while its fate was being decided became deeply attached to the child and fought the parents, successfully, to be appointed his guardians, in effect his parents, the natural parents being limited to rights of infrequent visitation. The surgery was performed, and the child, now a teenager, is doing well, as many children with Down's syndrome apparently are able to do. The Cinderella ending persuades Minow that society can resolve the dilemma of difference without having to embrace either horn. But the case was an easy one: the parents in effect abandoned the child, and the state quite rightly reassigned the parental rights to a couple who were optimistic about the child's prospects. Minow makes an easy case seem hard in order to make the hard cases seem soluble.

Those who believe that "reality" is constructed rather than found are prone to forget that not every social construction is arbitrary. This tendency is conspicuous in Minow's book, sometimes amusingly, as when she expresses wonderment at the couple who conducted elaborate funeral obsequies for their son's pet mouse at the same time that they were setting traps for the pet's wild cousins. She might as well be baffled that the nation mourned Lincoln's death but not that of his assassin. Minow quotes with approval a sociologist's statement that "social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance," as if the murderer were an artifact of the criminal law, which in a sense he is, but not a useful sense. And she mentions "elderly people suffering from what has been called senility," as if senility were merely an epithet. She describes the mentally retarded as merely "delayed in their progress along the path of development followed by every human being," as if with time and patience we can all be Einstein; yet elsewhere she affirms the existence of real differences in mental capacity.

It might seem all the clearer that there are real differences in physical capacity. Yet to Minow the able-bodied are merely the "temporarily able," and she takes at face value—rather credulously, it seems to me—the answer given by a severely crippled person to the question of what he would do first if he could leave his wheelchair: "Get right back in." Minow likes fables but has forgotten the one about the fox without a tail. She seeks to minimize the differences between normal and handicapped persons so that we won't look down on the latter *and* to maximize our sympathy for them—which requires, however, that we retain a lively perception of real differences that are highly disadvantageous to them.

Minow says that "children *no less than adults* can participate in the legal conversation that uses rights to gain the community's attention" (my emphasis), but she clearly does not mean this literally. For she has just acknowledged that courts might have to appoint not just one legal guardian, but "multiple representatives," for a child caught in a legal proceeding, in order "to offer contrasting views of children's interests and rights." Children are inarticulate; adults must speak for them. True enough; but to talk

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then of children's "rights" is as misleading as to talk of children participating in the legal conversation. The issue is how far the law should protect children, and by what means. The language of rights may actually be inimical to children's interests. Minow is concerned about the prevalence of sexual abuse of children, yet her repeated affirmations of children's rights, children's competence, children's parity with adults, could be thought to imply that the age of consent should be drastically lowered, which would have the effect of decriminalizing most child abuse. She may answer that you can be competent yet powerless, which is true. But the distinction is more pertinent to the rape of children than to the seduction of children, the more prevalent abuse.

In an uncharacteristically turgid sentence, commenting on Carol Gilligan's finding that girls and boys react differently to ethical problems, Minow simultaneously affirms and denies that women are different from men:

> Gilligan's study thus does not assert inherent or even descriptive differences between males and females so much as it posits an alternative perspective that is enabled when the researcher includes women in studies and builds frameworks of analysis from their statements rather than judging them in relation to frameworks constructed with men in mind.

If women's statements reflect a conceptual or moral framework different from men's (as Gilligan's work suggests), men and women are different.

The book is peppered with questions, some rhetorical, and a number of those suggest answers opposite to what Minow has in mind. For example, "Why would the sixteen-year-old be competent to be treated as an adult in criminal court but not competent to purchase alcohol?" Because we think him deterrable by the threat of adult criminal punishment—provided we can keep him sober. Finally, while derisive about basing public policy on biology, Minow criticizes the term "surrogate mother" because it "obscures the fact that it applies to the person who is actually the biological mother" (the "real" mother).

Minow is an intelligent, conscientious, hard-working member of a distinguished law faculty. The flaws in her book—neglect of issues of cost and incidence (i.e., who pays?), indecision, wishful thinking, contradictions born of a desire to have things both ways at once, occasional lapses into essentialist thinking, a certain thinness wearing the guise of judiciousness—are the failings of a system more than of an individual. That system is academic law, which does not today, if it ever did, contain the answers, or the resources for generating the answers, to the profound social questions that engage Minow's interest.

The reason is that the focus of most academic law is not on social problems at all, let alone on the tools of analysis required for the understanding and amelioration of such problems (let us not fool ourselves into thinking that profound social problems are actually solvable). It is on legal texts, and on the techniques for interpreting and manipulating such texts and the ideas in them. Minow is not a narrow lawyer. She has read widely in philosophy, history, sociology, and other fields, and she is steeped in feminist scholarship; what she is not is an expert on mental retardation, labor markets, physical handicaps, or public finance.

Minow's engagement with the actual subject matter of her book is mediated by a vast secondary literature written by historians, philosophers, law professors, etc., who are themselves not experts in mental retardation, labor markets, etc. She writes less about the problems of the disadvantaged than about the writers about those problems, and, as is sadly characteristic of American lawyers, she displays no interest in foreign experience with the same problems. The only exception is a brief, laudatory reference to the "respectful attitudes toward bilingualism and, indeed, multilingualism in other countries." (Ask a Belgian, a Yugoslav, a Malaysian, or a Canadian about the joys of a multilingual society.) The essential facts and figures concerning the subject matter of this book—such as how many persons with serious physical or mental handicaps there are, of what sort, mitigable at what cost paid by whom—are missing, and the gap is not closed by the voluminous citations to feminists, postmodernists, law professors, and judges.

Minow's book is a useful reminder—made especially timely by the impending passage of federal legislation expanding the legal rights of the handicapped—of the existence of social problems to which many of us would prefer to close our eyes (and because we closed our eyes, we overlooked cheap ways of constructing our buildings and public ways to enable them to be used by people confined to wheelchairs). It is an effective summary of the pragmatic response to appeals to the natural and intrinsic, although some readers will be disappointed that in so long a book Minow finds no room to discuss discrimination against homosexuals—a prime example of discrimination founded on essentialist ideas, in particular the idea of natural versus unnatural sex—and little to discuss racial discrimination.

But my principal criticism is unrelated to the scope of the book. It is that the book fails to live up to its pragmatist billing. It solves, it ameliorates, none of the social problems it discusses. The book is a prolegomenon, and as such is, despite its somewhat limited scope, too long for what it does. It is not policy analysis, but discourse about policy analysis. It is properly critical of abstraction, of generality, but is itself abstract, general. It clears some underbrush. It plants no trees.

RICHARD A. POSNER is a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School. His most recent books are *The Problems of Jurisprudence* (Harvard University Press) and *Cardozo: A Study in Reputation* (University of Chicago Press).

True Pooh

BY RICHARD JENKYNS

A. A. Milne: The Man Behind Winnie-the-Pooh by Ann Thwaite

(Random House, 554 pp., $29.95)

This is the biography of a popular Edwardian light essayist, one of the most successful English playwrights of the period between the two World Wars, a novelist with thirteen books to his credit, and the author of works in defense of pacifism and a deist view of the universe. Or perhaps it is not. A. A. Milne earns a book of more than 500 pages not for the bulk of his life's work, but for four small books for children written over a short period in the 1920s—because he is, in the words of Ann Thwaite's subtitle, "The Man Behind Winnie-the-Pooh." The subtitle does not appear in the British edition, and so it has probably been foisted on

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her by the publisher; but publishers' decisions tell their own story.

Pooh's popularity is worldwide and looks set to last, with a fame among children's books surpassed, if at all, only by Alice. When *Winnie Ille Pu* appeared in Latin, it became the first book in a foreign language to make the American best-seller list. One had expected the translator to be a whimsical clergyman or schoolmaster living in retirement in Hove or Budleigh Salterton; he turned out to be a Hungarian from Brazil. According to *The Christian Science Monitor*, "Few people in responsible positions in society today have got to eminence without the influence of Pooh"—a consideration that Allan Bloom and Paul Kennedy may have overlooked.

When E. H. Shepard, Milne's illustrator, gave his drawings to the Victoria and Albert Museum, the exhibition mounted there in his honor was packed to bursting. Old gentlemen brought their grandchildren. Young men in beards talked in strident voices about the socio-cultural constructs of upper-middle-class life in the interwar period. Stuffed toys sat solemnly behind glass cases, with scholarly labels beneath them: "Bear, German, c. 1920," "Bear, English, c. 1930, showing influence of Pooh," "Bear, Harrods, 1974." And there, in one case, were some of the most celebrated literary personalities of our century: Pooh, Eeyore, Tigger, and company. It was an oddly dreamlike experience to confront these mythic figures in the flesh (or in the fabric)—like meeting Sherlock Holmes or Long John Silver and finding them to be real.

What is the secret of Pooh's success? "Academic critics," Thwaite remarks, "have problems with children's literature. There is so little to say about it without sounding pretentious and absurd." This is especially true of the Pooh books; as John Rowe Townsend observes, they are "as totally without hidden significance as anything ever written." The silliest judgment cited by Thwaite comes from Humphrey Carpenter, who crashes straight into the heffalump trap. Milne's humor, he claims, is that of a mathematician: "Each humorous situation in the Pooh books is reached by the logical pursuit of an idea to the point of absurdity. . . . [Milne] handles words in the kind of detached manner in which a mathematician deal with figures." That is what happens when a Critic of Very Large Brain feels he has to say something clever. It is an odd coincidence that Lewis Carroll and Milne should both have been mathematicians (Milne by education, Carroll by profession), but it is not more than that.

The contrast between the two writers is in fact revealing. Someone reading Alice and knowing nothing at all about its author would probably notice the donnish streak and the philosophical logician's cast of mind. Milne does not leave clues of that sort. People who met him found him charming, funny, and yet curiously aloof: you did not penetrate beyond the elegant surface. He is like that in the Pooh books too—friendly and humorous but giving very little away. He emerges from this biography as a man of high intelligence and an able controversialist (he was an assiduous writer of letters to the London *Times* on public affairs). But in his children's books he seems as blithe and simple a soul as, say, P. G. Wodehouse.

And the Forest is a simple place; it is never frightening, like the Wild Wood in *The Wind in the Willows*. There is no fear or violence or villainy. We do not meet here Carroll's sense that grown-ups—metamorphosed into a Caterpillar, a Duchess, a Red Queen, or a Queen of Hearts—are alarming and unpredictable, or Beatrix Potter's awareness that her pretty watercolor animals are preying on one another, in the most literal sense, or Kenneth Grahame's social terror that dreadful lower-class weasels may be smashing up the manor house. Nor do the Pooh books offer any purchase for the fashionable notion that the best children's books are subversive.

Alison Lurie, who has popularized this idea, is cited by Thwaite for her suggestion that Milne's success is to have "created out of a few acres of Sussex countryside, a world that has the qualities both of the Golden Age of history and legend, and the lost paradise of childhood—two eras which, according to psychologists, are often one in the unconscious mind." In a way that idea seems plausible, and yet it somehow misses the point, for it describes an adventitious gratification that adults can draw from their reading of the books, not what is essentially there. Grahame chose *The Golden Age* as a title for one of his books about children (also illustrated by Shepard); nostalgic, allusive, and self-conscious, it shows what the Pooh books are not. Surely the charm of Milne's Pooh is that it is innocent of literary or symbolic resonances.

Only in the last chapter of *The House at Pooh Corner*, with its wistful scent of nostalgia and blue remembered hills, is there a subtext that is kept implicit. I remember feeling pleasantly queasy when I read it as a child, as I did with "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn" in *The Wind in the Willows*, without properly understanding what was going on. In fact, Christopher Robin is about to go off to boarding school and realizing that he will have to grow out of his childhood

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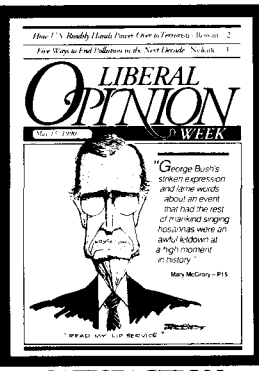

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toys. But this chapter apart, we seldom feel, as we do with most of the children's books that parents like best, that the grown-ups are talking to one another over our shoulders. That is a rarity in children's literature, and rarer than ever today. Even in so high a talent as Maurice Sendak a post-Freudian knowingness separates the adult from the child.

Part of Milne's success lies simply in his skill. Pooh and Eeyore are two of the most vivid and original characters in twentieth-century fiction. Richard Adams allows that for *Watership Down* he learned from the Pooh books "the vital importance, as protagonists, of a group of clearly portrayed, contrasting but reciprocal characters," but comparison between the two writers only brings out Milne's quality. Adams's teenage mutant boy scout hero rabbits are drawn with all the subtlety of Enid Blyton's school stories or *The Boys' Own Paper*. Milne's narrative, too, is beautifully controlled. He was a master of the light anecdote. Thwaite gives two extended examples, on trying to shoot a rabbit on a Scottish island, and on buying a sponge in Harrods. They are witty and entirely trivial, instances of his ability to make bricks from straw—or thistledown.

But the Pooh books have also lasted because in a strange way they are real. Thwaite quotes the indignant protest of a small girl after watching Walt Disney's Pooh. "That's not true. . . . I *know* what happened. We read it. The book's true." It is certainly true that many adults are offended by the Disney travesty of Pooh as they are not by other cartoon vulgarizations of the classics. Partly this is because by the time they got their hands on Pooh the Disney studios had lost the creative vitality that redeems their earlier films, partly because their coarse draftsmanship insults Shepard's original vision. But not entirely: there is also a sense of falsehood.

"The Man Behind Winnie-the-Pooh"—it is a queer phrase, when one thinks about it: one would hardly describe Dickens as the man behind Mr. Micawber. But in a sense it is indeed true that Milne did not create Pooh. The toy was real, and it was his son who christened it. One of Thwaite's most interesting revelations is that Milne's bedtime stories were not about the toy animals, but about dragons and princesses and knights in armor—partly because he thought they were dull stuff that would send a little boy to sleep. What we get from the Pooh books is something quite different: the real life—almost—of Christopher Milne playing with his real nursery toys. Indeed some of Milne's critics have been repelled by just that: the feeling that a small boy's life has been exposed to public gaze.

Some people find Milne's style unbearably winsome: "It is that word 'hummy,' my darlings," Dorothy Parker wrote, "that marks the first place in *The House at Pooh Corner* at which Tonstant Weader fwowed up." But that is sloppy criticism. There is no baby language in the Pooh books. What we find is the bantering, affectionate tone in which adults address children, especially children they know well, and that is quite a different matter. Milne gives the impression of talking to his readers just as he talks to his son; in that respect *Winnie-the-Pooh* is one of the least patronizing of children's books. Christopher Milne has recalled that his father's "relationships were always between equals, however old or young, distinguished or undistinguished the other person."

The setting of the stories is real as well. Milne was a Londoner by upbringing, as was Christopher Robin, but he had always loved country pursuits, and when he could afford it, he bought himself a retreat at Cotchford Farm, on the edge of Ashdown Forest in Sussex. The Forest is a bare expanse of sandy upland heath, dotted with scattered clusters of pines, rising unexpectedly from the pastoral lushness of the Weald, with thicker broad-leaved woodland folded into the valleys below. That is exactly the setting of *Winnie-the-Pooh*. You may see it in Shepard's pictures; indeed, Shepard went to Cotchford to record the landscape. (Thwaite includes a photograph of the Poohsticks bridge, looking just as it does in the drawing.) Even the toys are faithfully reproduced. Shepard's one departure from accuracy was inspired. The original Pooh was long and loose-limbed, with thickish curly hair; the plump dumpy bear that the world knows was based on Growler, who belonged to Shepard's son. Curiously, Milne had already written a poem about a fat bear before he began the Pooh stories; it is as though he and his illustrator had both seen the Platonic form of the teddy bear, and found it tubby.

As Thwaite says, "Part of the strength and charm of the stories comes from the juxtaposition of toy animal and forest." That too is real; it is the way things are within a child's make-believe. Milne's achievement is to get inside the childish imagination. It is a boy's world; none of the animals is female except for Kanga, and apparently Milne, uninstructed in marsupial biology, had supposed when he bought her that she too was male. And there are no adults in the Forest; instead Christopher Robin is, as Thwaite puts it, the "godlike child," serenely in command.

The first Pooh story was originally illustrated by one J. H. Dowd, who depicted Christopher Robin as a lovable scamp. Shepard's Christopher Robin is elegant and always beautifully dressed—and quite right too, for in the stories he is the competent hero of the child's own fantasy, respected by all his toys. Wodehouse teased Milne with a story in which a writer is lured by fatherhood into turning out mush about "Timothy Bobbin" until he is brought to his senses by the infant asking, "Daddee, are daisies little bits of stars that have been chipped off by the angels?" But of course Christopher Robin never talks like that. "Pooh and Piglet are the children," Thwaite suggests, "and the boy takes on the role of the adult." The second half of that judgment is shrewd; the first part does not seem quite right. You love your teddy bear because he is both a humble listener, to whom you can tell things, and an avuncular presence whom you can cuddle for comfort ("Silly old bear!"). Pooh is less a child than a childlike uncle—a subtly different thing.

Thwaite is a fluent, agreeable, and modest biographer, who knows how to tell a story and does not intrude with tendentious speculation. The best part of the book is perhaps her account of Milne's childhood and of his admirable father, a schoolmaster of liberal principle. She also gives a simple and eloquent account of Milne's last, sad years, mysteriously soured, embittered by an obscure grievance against the son whom he had made famous, and eventually half paralyzed. It is chilling to read that after Milne's funeral his widow never saw her son again, though she lived another fifteen years. Thwaite is good on the literary milieu, poor on the theater, which was after all a large part of Milne's career. And the book, pleasant though it is to read, goes on too long. There is not enough in Milne's life to fill so much space, all the more because he was a very private man, and his wife's personality seems to be irrecoverable. Frank Swinnerton ironically declared:

> Milne is so far out of the literary fashion that he failed to detest his parents. . . . He failed to detest his school and his schoolfellows. . . . He failed to have furtive adolescent sexual misadventures. . . . He married early, and his marriage failed to be a failure.

It is sporting of Thwaite to quote this, but it draws attention to a problem that she has not entirely overcome. How much can you write about the uneventful life of a nice man who kept himself to himself?

Milne's work for adults seems all to

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have been forgotten. Might some of the plays be worth reviving? *Mr. Pim Passes By* was once thought to be a modern classic, and Wodehouse, often an acid judge, called *The Dover Road* his favorite play. Still, Pooh is immortal: "Wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest a little boy and his Bear will always be playing." Or will they? Like so many English literary figures, Pooh and his friends toured the United States, making money from personal appearances, and Milne eventually presented the animals to Dutton, his American publisher. They now reside in the New York Public Library: prisoners of Manhattan, they will never see the Forest again. As for Milne's home, it is hard for a cottage within forty miles of London to keep its innocence, and Cotchford Farm, once simple, has since been smartened up with every modern convenience. It was bought by Brian Jones, one of the Rolling Stones; his drug-addled body was found floating in the bright new swimming pool.

RICHARD JENKYNS is the author of *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Harvard University Press).

TRB *continued from page 4*

America than is life in New York. Simply because it is bigger and more crowded than anyplace else, New York's quotidian texture is different. Even very affluent people don't own cars. Even people of modest means don't do their own laundry. Things like that. This is not a moral judgment on New Yorkers. Different doesn't mean better or worse. It's just an observation that it may be healthier for democracy when members of Congress drive to the mall on Saturdays.

On the other hand, a nation's life does lose something when all the politicians are off in a bell jar of their own. In London the political types, cultural types, and business types all mix together, talk together, drink together, sleep together, sometimes even procreate together. The result is a richer stew than any of the ingredients taken alone.

In America the people who write novels, make movies, and produce television shows know nothing about how politics really works, and it shows. The politicians tend to be philistines, and that shows too. You don't find THE NEW REPUBLIC casually reviewing a collection of parodies of famous poems edited by the secretary of education, as did a recent issue of the London *Spectator*. There is no modern-day Trollope to do for Washington what Tom Wolfe did for New York in *Bonfire of the Vanities*, because no one who could write *Bonfire of the Vanities* would want to live in Washington. It's a price we pay.

So there will probably never be a great Bonn novel. Members of the Bundestag won't be performing, or even drinking, in smoky Berlin cabarets. That's OK. Some of us prefer our German politicians on the boring side.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

with Marshall Wiley, not with Joe Conason or TNR. Clearly the Forum intended the Iraqi government and the financial community to think that the purpose of Stoga's presence on its delegation to Baghdad was to enhance the Iraqi-American commercial relationship. If this impression is somehow at variance with the facts, Kissinger Associates has made no apparent effort to get the organization to correct it. Still, apart from Stoga's trip with the Forum delegation (and the evidence of the activities of Kissinger Associates' clients, which is essentially circumstantial), the record shows no proof that Kissinger Associates was otherwise involved in commercial undertakings with Iraq. If the "Kissinger angle"—as opposed to the unambiguous involvement of the corporate members of the U.S.-Iraq Business Forum—was overemphasized in Conason's article, it should be noted that this relative emphasis was the idea of the editors of TNR, not of Conason. As for Dr. Kissinger's view of the Saddam Hussein regime, it remains what it has been for years, and it is not friendly.

Sand grouses

To the editors:

In your editorial "Sand Trap" (September 24), you set forth a totally inaccurate representation of my position on the Persian Gulf crisis. You extrapolated from one article out of dozens and came up with a mistaken interpretation of my views.

As I have consistently stated, I agree completely with the president's goals and actions. At no time have I differed with him. I did suggest, in the early days of the crisis when war fever appeared to be gripping everyone, that we should lower the rhetoric momentarily and explore whether Saddam Hussein would back down before we rushed the likelihood of shedding the blood of American men and women. The same afternoon I made this observation, the president himself expressed support for U.N. Secretary General Pérez de Cuéllar's diplomatic mission to the region.

At no time did I suggest we should negotiate away our principles and goals. Hussein has to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait, with a return to the *status quo ante*. Clearly, he should not be allowed to benefit from his aggression, and I never suggested he should. No diplomatic outcome that I have ever envisioned would permit him to do so.

Your article suggests that I do not know how to avoid the nuclear problem with Iraq. I disagree. My statement embracing covert or overt measures is explicit on its face. As one who openly supported Israel's destruction of the Iraqi nuclear weapons facility, I believe I have been clear on this subject.

I have never suggested an unwillingness to use force if that is required. As a matter of fact, I was a very early and prominent supporter of President Bush's action to remove Manuel Noriega from power in Panama. But before exercising a military option the president had exhausted every diplomatic option, including efforts through the Organization of American States, to isolate and topple Noriega. In the case of Noriega, the OAS failed in its responsibilities. In the case of Hussein, the United Nations has responded very well.

I believe the president and his administration have done a brilliant job to date in bringing nearly complete international isolation to the Hussein regime and in ensuring that if the military option is necessary we are truly prepared to use it effectively and with a minimum of U.S. casualties.

JOHN F. KERRY
Washington, D.C.

The writer is a senator from Massachusetts.

Postmodern Babbitts

To the editors:

In Irving Howe's fascinating essay on history and the novel ("History and the Novel," September 3), he mentions that Sinclair Lewis's character Babbitt is now "almost forgotten, the name familiar only to the elderly." Howe might be interested to know that in a recent episode of "thirty-something," the advertising man Miles Drentell (a sort of postmodern Babbitt himself, as emblematic of his age as the original Babbitt was of his) referred to the businessman who was trying to take over Drentell's agency as "a Babbitt." I took an informal poll of my thirty-something friends, and most of them recognized the reference. Archetypes do die, but in this particular case, reports of Babbitt's death are greatly exaggerated.

JAMES HYNES
Iowa City, Iowa

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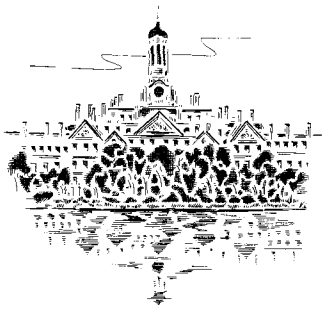
CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Confessions

I WENT TO THE POLLS ON SEPTEMBER 18 assuming I was a registered independent, and planning, under my state's modified open-primary dispensation, to vote for William Weld for the Republican nomination for governor of Massachusetts. It would have been my first vote ever in a Republican primary, though on a very few occasions in the past I had deserted the Democratic line in the general election. But each such desertion was traumatic; I was brought up to believe that if I pulled the Republican lever my right hand would wither, as the Psalmist put it in a weightier, more spiritual context, and my tongue would cleave to the roof of my mouth. Now I'm not so sure; in any case, I felt no ominous tingling in fingers or palate as I contemplated casting my ballot for Weld. His record as U.S. attorney in Massachusetts and then as deputy attorney general in Washington was exemplary. If public servants may be judged by their enemies, he had certainly made the right ones: the local Mafiosi, the drug syndicates, and Edwin Meese, under whom he had worked at Justice. There even had been rumors that Meese would come to the commonwealth to campaign for Weld's opponent in the primary, a rather unprepossessing state legislator who, like every loser this time around, had won the endorsement of his party's state convention. Now Weld has the nomination, and his victory is the first sign that liberal Republicanism, moribund for years, may be experiencing a revival in New England. I'm mindful of Gene McCarthy's devastating aperçu about liberal Republicans, that "they come as an act of mercy to shoot the wounded." But in Massachusetts, at least after the wasteland that Michael Dukakis and his hauteur have made of this state, allowing the Democrats to continue to govern would just be inviting more of the same. So for all our readers who've been looking for signs of my defection from Democratic orthodoxies, here is one. I'm working and voting for Bill Weld.

BUT I DIDN'T ACTUALLY VOTE FOR Weld in the primary; I wasn't allowed to. It turned out I hadn't sent in the right form or something, so I was handed the Democratic ballot. My choice was between Frank Bellotti, who'd been running for governor, it seemed, for a generation, and John Silber, a tough-talking educator with political aspirations. Voting for Bellotti was already an ingrained habit of mine. In 1966 he and Elliot Richardson—he of the Bush-length résumé—were facing each other for Massachusetts attorney general. Though a Republican, Richardson was the favorite of the local liberal illuminati, and their acolytes across the state abandoned Bellotti in sufficient droves to cost him the election. The preference of the Brattle Street Brahmins and Brombergs for Richardson was a class preference, not a political one; crossing party lines was difficult for these folks, and I suspect it was made easier by an ethnic bias that doesn't even have a name. As one neighbor said, "I just don't want the chief legal officer of the state to be a man with an 'i' at the end of his name." I voted for Bellotti, perhaps more to buck the tide in the social environment than for any other reason, and I'd been voting for him ever since. That is, up till this time, when I voted . . . horrors! . . . for John Silber.



I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHY. Part of it, certainly, was that Silber was in no way connected to the Dukakis disaster. Moreover, as I'd watched over the years from afar the controversies swirling around Silber's stewardship of Boston University, it seemed more often than not that he was in the right and that those who charged him with politicizing the institution were the real politicizers, burdening the curriculum and the appointment process with their particular political agenda, an agenda that is at odds with serious intellectual work. I also thought that Silber's refusal to speak in the kind of Aesopian language with which politicians ordinarily obfuscate the issues might somehow clarify them. Still, I have to admit that what really built my sympathy for Silber was the unrelenting hostility of *The Boston Globe* to his candidacy. The *Globe* even sued Silber for violating its copyright by reproducing one of its headlines in a campaign advertisement. The paper's hostility, then, was not confined to the editorial page; it suffused its news coverage and distorted its attempts at analysis. The result made the *Globe* a big loser, and it made some of its best-known staff writers look silly. Consider Curtis Wilkie, who seems to understand Massachusetts no better than he did the Middle East, which he used to cover. Discussing some pungent Silber television appearance, Wilkie wrote, in a front-page report just five days before the primary, that Silber "exposed a Massachusetts audience to the self-immolation of his campaign . . . this was an extraordinary performance, almost as sensational and ruinous as the acts of Buddhist monks in Saigon who once set themselves on fire in front of cameras in an ultimate statement of protest. By reaching a white-hot intensity Silber frightened away voters who represented his last possibility to win new support." Oops.

KITTY DUKAKIS SEEMS TO THINK that the country is better off without her husband as president. This is not because she is newly aware of his flaws. It's because she thinks that it would have been awful if she herself had become first lady. Awful for her, awful for us. In 1988 she campaigned as the plucky recovering pill-popper, Betty Ford-style, all the while exhorting others to just say no between self-administered doses of oblivion, Marion Barry-style. Just now, though, she is in a confessional mood, telling us why and when she gave up her virginity, how her mother abused her, and precisely what elixirs she imbibed when she couldn't find a proper drink. Some of this might be interesting if Kitty were, well, more interesting. Her book, *Now You Know*, is one of those ghost-written productions so common these days in our culture of political celebrity. But given what it's supposed to be about, it's the equivalent of taking along a press spokesman into the confession box. She is still maintaining many of the fictions, among them that her husband was done out of the presidency by skillfully venal men in the Bush camp. Or like this one, more personal: "One of the most precious aspects of our marriage is our honesty with each other." Honesty? Then how come, after twenty-five years of marriage, the man didn't know his wife was an addict—to both drugs and alcohol? Because "he had bigger worlds to conquer. . . ." Indeed he did. He was too self-absorbed to notice. Just as he was too self-absorbed and too self-mesmerized to admit what was too obvious for him not to have known—that while he was deceiving the Democratic Party and trying to deceive the country about what he grandly called (as if he and not God performed wonders) the Massachusetts Miracle, the whole state was going down the tubes.

MARTIN PERETZ

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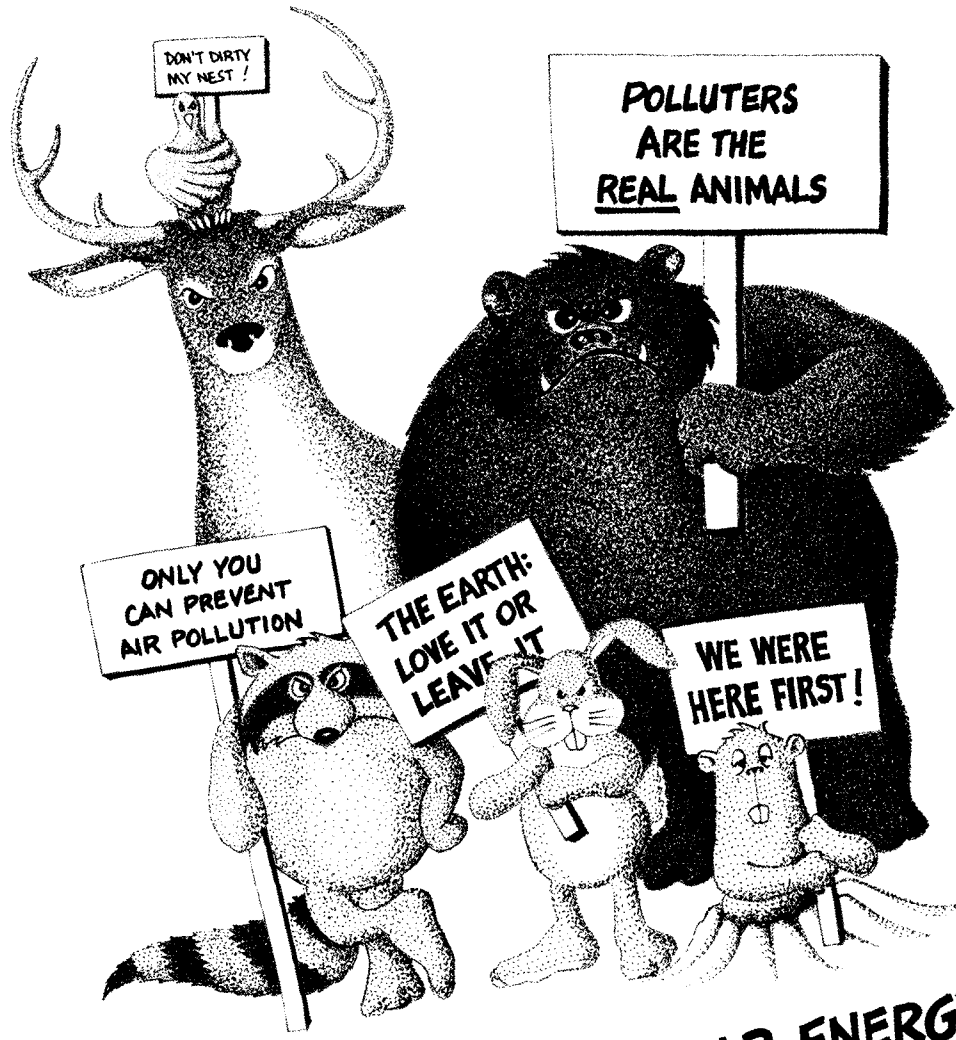

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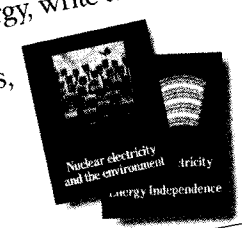

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